

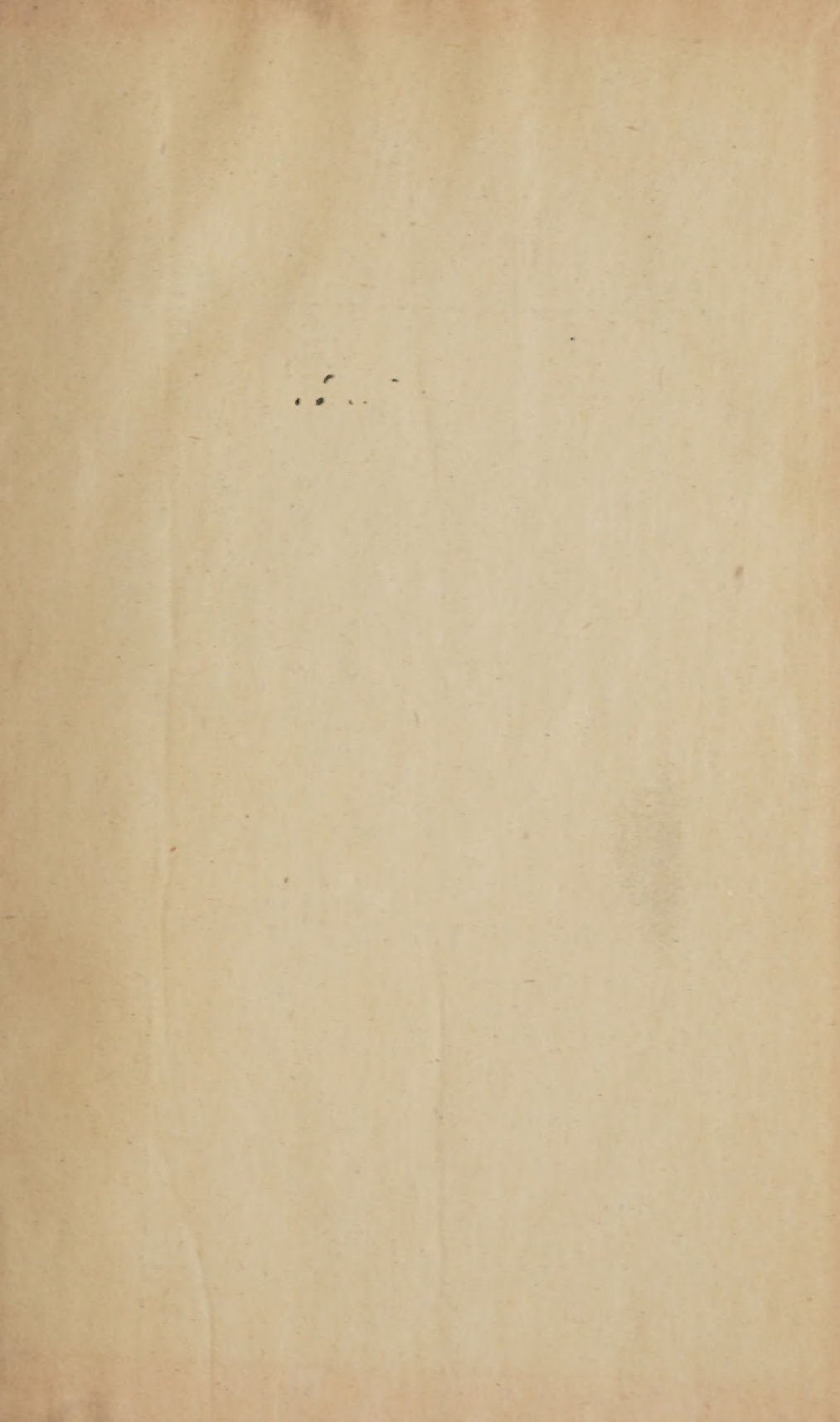
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JOB CAUDLE'S

DINNER-TABLE HARANGUES.



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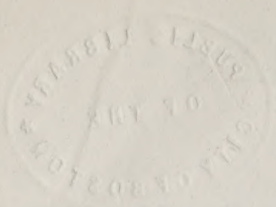
BY THE GHOST OF MRS. CAUDLE.

New-York :

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July 31, 1864

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JOB CAUDLE'S HARANGUES.

TO THE READER.

I AM a bachelor, dear reader.

A few evenings since, after a nice supper, *solus*, in my room at the Astor, to which I did ample justice, I took up for my amusement a small pamphlet, entitled, "*Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*," and carelessly thumbed it over. I threw it down after a cursory perusal, with a sentiment of profound sympathy for the unfortunate Mr. Caudle, and of sincere gratulation at my personal freedom.

"Thank God," I said to myself, as I yawned, and stretched my legs, "I can retire to my couch without any fears of a curtain lecture."

Soon afterward I retired, 'to sleep, perchance to dream.'

My slumbers were uneasy. I had, perhaps, eaten a trifle too much of the steak, etc.; or could it have been the extra glasses of Madeira?

Dim, uncertain, confused visions of matrimonial infelicity floated through my disturbed brain. At length, however, though fast asleep, I seemed to myself to be surveying, with critical discernment, the furniture of my apartment.

Clothes-press, book-case, writing-desk, chairs, bust of Cicero, wash-stand, all were in their places.

The fauteuil stood near the bedside.

I was startled.

In the fauteuil, with fierce, gray eyes, glaring full in my face, sat the figure of an old woman, wrapt in a yellow shawl, and wearing a neat dimity cap.

"Who the devil are you?" broke incessantly from me.

"I am the ghost of a much-abused, much-calumniated woman," lugubriously whined

the midnight apparition. "I AM THE GHOST OF MRS. CAUDLE!"

I listened in amazement.

"Yes, sir, I am the ghost of that betrayed and injured woman. By the treachery and falsehood of the man whom I once called my husband, I have been held up to the ridicule of the world. I have been represented as a scold, a termagant, a babbling, fault-finding woman. I, who scarcely ever opened my mouth even to defend myself—who bore everything—who was a pattern to wives and mothers, have been disturbed in my grave by the malice and cruelty of a wretch. My name has been made a cause of reproach. All over the world, if a woman chide, or remonstrate with a perverse husband, *Mrs. Caudle* is thrown in her teeth! *Mrs. Caudle*, indeed!

"I will bear it no longer, sir; I will expose the true character of the ungrateful man who has slandered and abused me. Yes! ungrateful, sir. I was the making of Caudle. He was a loose, careless character when I married him, without a guinea. I cautioned him, I advised him, as a good wife should do. I economised for him—I toiled, and drudged for him, night and day—and he is now worth a plum. Go and ask our old neighbors, in the Great Crossings; they will tell you that Caudle is a rich man, and that his wife was the making of him.

"I don't fear any injury from Caudle's malice in England, sir. There he and I are known. He may print his lying papers till doomsday; he may swell out my gentle hints into long lectures, as he calls them, by bringing in all sorts of ridiculous and foolish expressions, that I never thought of. Even from his own stories, he can take no great

credit to himself. What did I object to but his wasting his money, running to taverns, paying attention to other women, and such like? The truth is, that I wanted to see him get along in the world, and do well for himself and his family. I was a woman of few words, sir, and not a babbler and a scold.

"I don't fear him in England, as I told you, sir. From Prince Albert down to the chimney-sweep, his character is known. But in this country his falsehood is calculated to injure my reputation, and to poison the peace of families. I will not be insulted any longer with impunity.

"Caudle shall be exposed, sir—he *shall* be exposed. He says I used to threaten him with exposure during my lifetime. It is false and scandalous. I would have scorned to be the first to lay open family secrets, or family differences, to the world. I had too much pride for that—too much self-respect. I do it now in self-defence—I do it to ward off the blows of a living slanderer.

"The fact is, sir," continued the spectre of the old woman, "Caudle had an awful temper, and a penurious, grudging disposition, where his own taste was not to be consulted. To see him walk along the street, with his calm, deceitful face, you would imagine that he was a type of his namesake, Job. But you ought to have heard him at the dinner-table, when his temper was roused. He was outrageous, sir. You cannot think how he would go on about the

merest trifles. I used to bear his tantrums when I ought not to have borne them. I see it now—I was too forbearing. I let him domineer over me in a way that I should not have done. I let him have his own way too much, and kept silence, when I should have given him his own. I did it for peace sake, sir. I wasn't afraid of him, though he did talk loud, and flourish his carving-knife, and slap his fist upon the table. The biggest man in England couldn't frighten me. But I bore it, sir, and where's my thanks?

"You shall see how Caudle conducted himself in his family—how he talked to a painstaking, industrious, amiable wife—how pleasant he made himself at the dinner-table with his boisterous harangues. You shall see what I have had to endure from him in my lifetime. Read these papers, sir."

I awoke suddenly, and rubbed my eyes. The apparition of the old woman had vanished, but a bundle of papers, tied with a pink ribbon, lay in the bottom of the rocking-chair.

I perused the manuscript at my leisure, and in justice to the memory of the deceased Mrs. Caudle, I present this statement, and the accompanying papers, to the world. They form but a small portion of the bundle confided to my care. Circumstances will determine whether any further publication is necessary, to the complete vindication of a lady who has been grievously and maliciously traduced.

H A R A N G U E I.

Mrs. Caudle has provided a Sirloin of Beef without Tomato Sauce.

WHAT have you for dinner to day, Mrs. Caudle? Roast Beef? capital! There's nothing in the world that I like better than a good sirloin of beef. It is tender too, and cooked to a T. I cannot deny, Betsy, that you are ahead of the royal cook at roasting a piece of beef. But where is the tomato sauce?

No tomato sauce, Mrs. Caudle? I am sure you must be joking. Where is the tomato sauce, my dear? No tomato sauce? none?

The dinner is spoiled. The roast beef is

good for nothing. Didn't I tell you the very last time we had a piece of roast beef for dinner—roast beef with tomato sauce, Mrs. Caudle, didn't I tell you that I would never have a sirloin of beef on the table again without tomato sauce; that the sauce if anything, was better than the beef? No tomato sauce, indeed!

There's apple sauce, is there? Who wants apple sauce! What the deuce do I care for apple sauce! I used to like it! What's that to the purpose? I used to like

a great many things, Mrs. Caudle, that I don't like now. I wish the apple sauce was at the bottom of the Thames. I'll eat none of it, I can assure you. If I can't have tomato sauce for dinner, when I particularly desire it, I'll eat none of your apple sauce, that you may depend on.

Yes, I see the baked beans and the hot mealy potatoes and the pickled beets. So much the worse, Mrs. Caudle, so much the worse. A good dinner, a capital dinner, spoiled for the want of tomato sauce. And you know what a particular liking I have taken for that sauce, with roast beef. But then it's my fancy, your husband's. I can be put off with anything, apple sauce for tomato sauce.

The other morning at breakfast, Aunt Caroline from the country said that she was very fond of chicken pie. You were very polite, and obliging, Mrs. Caudle. You had an immense chicken pie for dinner that might have served one of the king's regiments.

I wonder, if your Aunt Caroline had expressed a liking for tomato sauce, whether she would have been disappointed? The next time she comes to the house, and she comes pretty often, I'll get her to try the experiment. She will have tomato sauce if she wants it, I'll wager a crown against a farthing. But then she's your aunt—I'm only your husband.

Now tell me, Mrs. Caudle, what is the reason that I must dine to day on roast beef, without tomato sauce? How do you account for it? What do you say? You're in the sulks again, I declare. I hate sulky women. Yes, of all things on earth, Mrs. Caudle, I hate a sulky woman. I ask you a civil question, and I want a civil answer. You are a peevish, sulky woman. At night when I am worried to death and want to go to sleep, your tongue runs like a mill-clapper. There's no stopping it. It's Caudle this and Caudle that. But if I have a fault to find with anything, I can get no satisfaction from you, not a syllable.

Don't go on so before the children? Yes I will go on as I please, Mrs. Caudle. I'll be master in my own house. Hold your plate, James, and take another slice of the beef. There's no tomato sauce for you, my boy, and you like it almost as well as I do. Wait

till Aunt Caroline comes to see us again, James, and if she says so, the sauce will be cooked, and we shall get a little of it perhaps.

I should like to know why there is no tomato sauce. There's plenty of tomatoes in the market—baskets of them, wagon loads of them, Mrs. Caudle. The hucksters almost give them away. The poorest man in the street with a wife that tries to please him, has tomato sauce with his dinner. I saw John Smith coming from market this morning with a piece of calf's liver, and I'll warrant you he has tomato sauce with it. I'd rather by a deuced sight have calf's liver with tomato sauce, than roast beef without it, and you know it, Mrs. Caudle.

You're sure that I can make out a dinner? So I can make out a dinner; I shan't starve; I can live on bread and butter, and so can the children. But here's a dinner that has cost ten shillings if it has cost sixpence, entirely spoiled for want of a penny's worth of tomatoes. That's your economy, is it, Mrs. Caudle? That's the economy you are always bragging about. To throw away ten shillings to save a penny—to spoil a good dinner for the sake of a few tomatoes. Pretty economy indeed!

Certainly, Mrs. Caudle, I'll take a piece of custard pie. I hav'n't eaten anything yet, and a man that works as I do, wants something to eat. What's that? You think I've eaten heartily of the beef, and baked beans, and potatoes, and beets, and bread? That shows what you know about it. I hav'n't eaten heartily of them, Mrs. Caudle. I have scarcely tasted them. How can I relish roast beef without tomato sauce? The thing is impossible, and you know it.

Isn't the custard pie to my taste? Yes, Mrs. Caudle, the pie is excellent, but I can't enjoy it. All the pies in the world would be unable to make up for the absence of tomato sauce. There, I'll eat no more. I have no patience with my disappointments, none at all, I'll go to the store and slave the rest of the day on an empty stomach.

And so saying Caudle rose from the table and left the room muttering angrily, "Pretty piece of business—No tomato sauce."

H A R A N G U E II.

Mrs. Caudle is Cleaning House.

WHAT'S going on now, Mrs. Caudle? I can hardly make my way through the entry, what with the tables and the chairs and the rest of the furniture turned topsy-turvy. What's in the wind now?

Cleaning house? So I supposed—that's what I said to myself as soon as I entered the hall door. And pray do you think it necessary, Mrs. Caudle, to clean house every three months? Do you not know that if there is anything in the world which I detest, it is cleaning house?

It's the last of September, and you always clean house the last of September? That's what I complain of. Once a year is often enough to clean house I'm positive. In the Spring somehow or other it's to be expected; I know that, and I'm resigned to it in the Spring, but what under the sun is the reason that this hubbub must be raised two or three times in the season.

I don't do the work? Don't I! Don'tt wist me in that way, Mrs. Caudle, don't, unless you wish to see me in a furious passion. And suppose I don't do the work, does that help the matter any? Is it nothing to have the house upside down two or three days? Is it nothing to be fairly turned out of doors by dust flying here and there, wet floors and ugly house cleaners? Is it nothing to have the furniture broken in pieces, as it always is? You made a great fuss the other night because Prettyman and a few friends supped with me, and the head of your Chinese mandarin got broken accidentally. I should like to know when you ever had a cleaning house frolic (for I really believe you consider it a frolic and delight in it) without breaking windows and looking glasses and crockery, and scratching chairs and tables and bureaux and sofas, and doing all sorts of damage to everything? Is all this nothing, madam?

Is it nothing that dinner is sure to be spoiled—and here's an example of it—the meat overdone, the vegetables half boiled? Hereafter, Mrs. Caudle, you will be good enough to inform me when this plague of existence, house-cleaning, is to infest us, and I will dine out, or perhaps go into the country for a week. A pretty dinner is this for a hungry man—and it's always so. It's one of the vexations of cleaning house, that your dinner must be half-cooked, or burnt to a cinder.

And the only meal I care about in the whole four and twenty hours is dinner, Mrs. Caudle, and you know it.

Phew, what a smell of lime there is all over the house! No wonder that I can't tell whether I am eating burnt mutton or burnt pork. And the smell of lime is so horrid—so perfectly detestable. It penetrates every where, and gets into every thing—into pantries, and closets and bed-chambers and every where. My clothes will smell of it, and my dinner taste of it, more or less for a month.

Some people with delicate nerves make a great fuss about a little tobacco smoke. I don't smoke tobacco or cigars, but I'm positive that I would rather eat my dinner in a tavern, so full of tobacco smoke that you might cut it with a case-knife, than in a room newly whitewashed; or even in a house where there has been newly slacked lime. The smell is sickening; indeed, I shouldn't wonder at all, if some of the children were to be taken ill in consequence of it.

And if the lime don't make any of them ill, there's the wet floors and damp air all through the house. I should like to know how we are to sleep comfortably to-night, any of us? Eliza Jane will be sure to have the croup—she has had it already two or three times, and a little exposure to wet and cold is sure to bring it on; we shall be kept up all night again, and there will be a pretty doctor's bill to pay for this frolic, not to speak of the danger of losing the dear child. It's one expense on the top of another, Mrs. Caudle, and all for what? To torment my life and soul out, that's it.

Yes, Mrs. Caudle, you practice on my patience, for you know very well that I have the patience of my namesake. But you know also that I detest cleaning house, and you do it to try my temper, to proyoke me—to worry me into a fever, or an apoplexy, or something worse.

Mercy on me, Mrs. Caudle! I have just thought of it, what have you done with the papers which I left upon the mantel-piece in the back parlor? Those papers were valuable, Mrs. Caudle, very valuable, and now they are lost I suppose. *They're safe in the drawer of the book-case?* Safe indeed! The drawer of the book-case is full of useless re-

ceipts and bills, and I may go and rummage the whole lot over in order to find them. Those papers are very important to me, Mrs. Caudle, and if they are lost, you'll find the odds of it I, can tell you.

I must go and hunt them up whatever happens, and I have an engagement at the shop, madam, at two o'clock; a business engagement, Mrs. Caudle, so I must leave my dinner half finished. There's one comfort in it, I don't lose much.

Caudle rose from the table and as he reached the door turned round, and looked me full in the face.

"Mrs. Caudle," he said with an expression not particularly Joblike, "the next time that the house is to be *cleaned*, (a special emphasis on *cleaned*) be so kind (here he grinned a ghastly smile) as to let me know it one day beforehand."

"Phew, that lime!"

HARANGUE III.

Mrs. Caudle has purchased a Grate at Auction for Two Pounds.

WHAT did you say, Mrs. Caudle? Ah! *You have been wondering if I had lost my appetite?* It would be strange, indeed, if I should lose my appetite on sitting down to such a dinner as this! The leg of lamb is not done, Mrs. Caudle; it is not half boiled. Do you hear, madam?

You are sorry for it, but you have been out all the morning? And pray where have you been, Mrs. Caudle? It appears to me that the proper place for a wife and a mother is at home, superintending her household affairs. In my early days, that was the doctrine. Women were not gadding about here and there and everywhere. I remember that my good mother scarcely went out of the house from one week's end to the other. Dinners were dinners in those days. But pray where have you been, Mrs. Caudle?

At an auction? An auction! a furniture auction, I suppose; and you bought something, of course?

Only a grate? What under the heavens did you want of a grate, Mrs. Caudle? Is there not a grate in the front parlor, and one in the back parlor? Is there not a grate in our bedchamber, and another in the children's apartment? What do you want of another grate? I'm positive that it cost me thirty pounds last winter for new grates, if it cost me a farthing. What are you going to do with the grate? Are you going to put it up in the cellar or the garret?

You're not going to put it up anywhere for the present? Then what did you buy it for, Mrs. Caudle?

It went so cheap? Isn't it astonishing that a sensible woman—I used to think you a sensible woman, Betsy—should have purchased a thing which she don't want, because it went cheap! But I deny your premises, Mrs. Caudle: it did not go cheap—it went dear, my life on it.

You only gave two pounds for it? Two pounds thrown away, this blessed morning—and two pounds is not such a trifle, I can assure you. Two pounds is more money than I have made to-day, Mrs. Caudle, and you have thrown it away on an old grate. *You don't want the grate?* We don't want it. I don't want it, madam. It will only be a nuisance when we get it to be piled up with the rest of your auction lumber in the garret. There's the cost of twenty pounds of old truck now in the garret, which is not worth a brass farthing to us—your purchases at auction, Mrs. Caudle.

It will all come in play some time or other? That's your old story. Now listen to me, once for all, Betsy. I'm your husband, and I have my rights as the master of the house. I forbid you, solemnly, to make any more purchases at auction. If you must go there to gossip and tittle-tattle with your acquaintances, I submit to that, but I will not have the house filled with such trash. When you want anything—when you really want anything, Mrs. Caudle, go to a respectable tradesman and order it. Then you will get the worth of your money, and I will say nothing against it. Is there any hardship in this rule, madam?

Eat my dinner? No, I shall not eat my

dinner. I'll give my opinion of these cursed auctions, if I never eat another dinner in my life. If there is anything in the world which I particularly detest, it is an auction. *The other day it was house cleaning?* That's wit, I suppose, Mrs. Caudle; that's intended for wit, or else to provoke me. But I will not be provoked—I will not get angry. I say again, madam, if there is anything which I particularly detest it is an auction—a furniture auction. Some moral people preach a great deal about taverns, and the losses and quarrels that spring from them; but it is my candid opinion that auctions have caused a greater sacrifice of money and temper, in this very city, than all the taverns and gin-palaces together.

What's that? What did you say? *Nonsense, Caudle?* Do you tell me that I talk nonsense? Next you will tell me that I am a fool; to be sure, I begin to think that I was a fool once; I begin to think that I made a great mistake a long while ago.

But I say this, Mrs. Caudle, coolly, that if I should ever get married again—mind you, *if* I should ever get married again—I would have it down in black and white, that my wife should never attend an auction, much less, buy the trumpery stuff that is offered for sale, only to swindle people out of their

money. I would make it a condition. I'd turn my back on the best woman in England sooner than I would take her upon any other terms.

I don't say anything against your going to shows, or exhibitions, or concerts, or the gardens. You are welcome to go and amuse yourself, when you please, Mrs. Caudle. I suppose you get tired of staying at home for ever. I will go out with you to the theatre whenever you desire it. I don't wish to restrain you from any suitable amusement; and you know it, Mrs. Caudle.

But I detest auctions and second-hand trumpery. There's two pounds squandered on an old grate, that I sincerely and heartily wish was at the bottom of the Thames—yes, at the bottom of the Thames. I never want to see it—never; and all because it went cheap!

Two pounds for nothing! Is this your economy, Mrs. Caudle? You talk enough about economy, in the name of conscience—but all preaching and no practicing is a miserable proof of sincerity.

And as Caudle left the table, in a huff, he added: "To-morrow, if there is no auction in the neighborhood, I shall hope to have a decent dinner."

H A R A N G U E I V .

Mrs. Caudle sits down to a Picked-up Dinner.

WELL, my dear, I have an appetite to-day: a deuce of an appetite. I'm as hungry as a bear. I have been running about all the morning, and exercise in the open air is the thing to give one a good appetite. You have got something nice for dinner to-day, my love, haven't you?

Ha! what's this, Mrs. Caudle? Do you call this a dinner?

It's a picked up dinner, is it? And pray where did you pick it up? Have you been sending the children around the neighborhood to beg cold victuals? *How can I talk so?* Didn't I tell you that I was as hungry as a bear; and I ask you plainly is this a dinner to set before a hungry man? A bit of cold chicken, and a bit of boiled ham, and a few sloppy vegetables. Am I so poor, Mrs. Caudle, so miserably poor, that I must

be stinted in this way; that I must be fed on scraps and slops?

The chicken is whole? No, Mrs. Caudle, the chicken is not whole. One wing is clear gone; and, upon my life, it's the very creature that I put aside at the supper table last night, on account of it's toughness. Now you have brought it here to palm it off upon me for my dinner. Well, Mrs. Caudle, I'm hungry enough, but I shan't eat that, I can assure you. Why didn't you give it to widow Laundie's boy this morning? I heard him at the kitchen door, telling a pitiful story of his mother's poverty. I dare say, as poor as she is, that she has got as good a dinner as I have, without being half as hungry.

Take a slice of the ham? If there's nothing else to eat, I must take a slice of the ham: there's no help for it. *I liked it yester-*

day? So I did like it yesterday; but is that any reason why I should have ham every day, and nothing else? With a nice piece of roast beef, or roast mutton, as a foundation, a slice of ham does very well. That is quite another affair. But for a hungry man to make a dinner of a slice of ham. What's that, Mrs. Caudle? *Isn't the ham good?* The devil take the ham.

Ain't I ashamed to swear before the children? Ain't you ashamed, Mrs. Caudle, to invite me to sit down to such a dinner as this? I ask you, as a housekeeper, as the head of a family, do you wish to bring up your children, your daughters, Mrs. Caudle, to such housewifery? Do you wish to teach them the art of getting up picked up dinners? What man of any spirit would marry one of them, and run the risk of being starved in this way? There's worse things in this world than swearing, madam. Yes, although a woman has no business with swearing, I would rather you should swear a score of times, than impose a 'picked up' dinner upon me when I am hungry; honestly I would. A slice of ham; but you will be liberal, Mrs. Caudle; I suppose I can eat as many slices of ham as I choose.

There are plenty of vegetables, and you are sure they are not sloppy? I dare say the vegetables are well enough, but do you think a thorough bred Englishman can live upon vegetables? I want something that has had life and blood in it. I have flesh on my bones, Mrs. Caudle; I have color in my face, and I would like to keep myself in good condition, if there's enough to eat in the land; and I want the children to grow up as I am, full, and plump, and hearty. None of your girls for me that look at a beef steak as though they were afraid of it.

James, my boy, can you make a dinner? There's plenty of ham—you like ham, don't you?

Mrs. Caudle, will you tell me what you mean by such conduct as this? What's that? What did you say? *Nothing?* You talk enough sometimes, madam. You are ready enough to speak when I don't want to hear

you. You are as contrary as the devil, that's the truth of the matter; and you know how I dislike contrary women. Can't you tell me why I am obliged to put up with such a dinner as this?

You didn't want to throw away good victuals? Ah! this is some more of your economy. Whenever my comfort is concerned, you are getting to be very economical, very. But you can spend five pounds in cleaning house, or two pounds on an old good for nothing grate, without thinking of the money. Do you know how many dinners two pounds will get, Mrs. Caudle? *Perhaps?* I've hit it. Yes, that's it, no doubt. You think to save enough by your picked up dinners to indulge in your auction whims as you please. But it shan't be, madam, it shan't be!

There! my appetite is gone. What did you say? *You should think so?* It isn't the trifle of ham, and vegetables, and bread that I've eaten, just enough to keep life in me. *What then?* I will tell you what then, Mrs. Caudle. It is from vexation at being treated in such an unhandsome manner. You make a convenience of me, your husband, Mrs. Caudle. Do you ever get up picked up dinners when your Aunt Caroline or your cousin Jemima is here? Oh! not a bit. I—

Don't get in a passion? No, madam, I will not get in a passion; but I'll talk to the point. We don't agree very well, Mrs. Caudle. You find a great deal of fault with me; and I tell you plainly that you pay too little attention to my dinners. Perhaps we had better separate quietly and peaceably. I'm a peaceable man, Mrs. Caudle, and as patient as Job. The neighbors know it, everybody knows it; but there's a limit, madam, to everything. I don't know much about the law, but I suspect that the Lord Chancellor would hold such cruelty as this to be a good ground for a divorce. But I don't wish to disgrace you, Mrs. Caudle. I've been a kind husband to you, and you know it.

And saying this, Caudle left the table, with a loud hem, which I could not interpret.

H A R A N G U E V.

Mrs. Caudle has received a Visit from her second cousin, Jemima.

It seems to me that you are very sulky to-day, Mrs. Caudle. You are as short as pie-crust. Yesterday your tongue ran glibly enough, and you were in the best humor possible. But then cousin Jemima was here, and now there's nobody but your husband. Fine times we have had during the past week; visitings and junketings. But you can't deceive me, madam. They were all for the sake of cousin Jemima. I know that very well.

Your country relations are very kind, Mrs. Caudle. They come to see us very often. What with Aunt Caroline, and Uncle Ezra, and Aunt Peggy and her children, and cousin Lucy, and cousin Jemima, we have somebody here two-thirds of the time. It is very convenient for a tradesman's family—very. For my part, I can't see what attraction there is in this quiet street to induce such a continual succession of visitors.

It isn't my politeness? That's pretty talk to your husband—very pretty talk indeed. There was a time, Mrs. Caudle, when you thought me polite; there was a time, madam, when I was somebody in your eyes. I can account for it easily enough. These country relations of yours come to my house and sit down at my table, and then fill your ears with their slanders and their backbitings. I see into it. Your aunt Caroline and your cousin Jemima, delight in nothing more than in getting up quarrels and misunderstandings between husband and wife. Besides, I don't understand how the old maid who has just gone off, comes to be related to you at all.

Her mother and your mother were cousins? Indeed—then she's your second or third cousin; which is it? second cousin? *Your second cousin?* A very near relation. Pray, madam, when I married you, did I put myself under an obligation to receive all your aunts and cousins to the twentieth degree? Did I marry you, Mrs. Caudle, or the family? *I ought to know?* Well I can tell you I did not marry the family. I never saw the one sixteenth part of the Wigstaff family till I had a house of my own.

Two or three times a year this old maid, cousin Jemima, comes here to bore me for a week at a time. What's that? What did you

say? *You'll write to her not to come again?* Yes, Mrs. Caudle, and have her show the letter to every country cousin of the Wigstaff family, and all their acquaintances, to prove what a mean fellow Betsy has married. You shan't write to her, madam. I know how old maids talk when they are offended—they are worse than Billings-gate fish-women. I hate old maids. If there is anything on earth which I particularly detest, it is an old maid. They are always disagreeable, ill-tempered, disobliging people.

Cousin Jemima is not disagreeable? Arn't she? Look at her nose, turned up like a fish-hook; look at her gray eyes, sharp as a cat's.

The children like her? The children don't like her, Mrs. Caudle. How should they? I'm positive that I have heard her talk as snappish and as spiteful to them, as if they were curs. It was only the other morning, that she told Matilda right before my face and yours, that she had a great mind to slap her. *Matilda pulled her hair?* There, Mrs. Caudle, that's right—that's motherly—stand up for her against your own flesh and blood! But I should like to see her lay the weight of her finger on a child of mine: I should like to see it. I wouldn't answer for myself. I won't undertake to say what I would do, but I wouldn't answer for myself.

I uphold the children in doing wrong, do I? There's some more of cousin Jemima's doings. That is the kind of talk which is going on between her and you, madam, when I am away at the shop. Fine times indeed you have together. It's Mr. Caudle ought to do this, and Mr. Caudle oughtn't to do that.

She doesn't talk about me? What does she do then? Who does she talk about? Presently you'll tell me that cousin Jemima, with her screwed up nose and thin lips, don't talk about any body. Poor innocent soul! and she an old maid! What else has she got to do, I wonder?

She is very industrious? What at? Spinning street yarn, I suppose, if anything. *She knit me a pair of stockings?* Well, I dare say the yarn cost more than the stockings are worth, now they are done; and I warrant her she was richly paid in the bargain. You are always making presents to your

country relations. You don't pay them for what they do, Mrs. Caudle—oh no; but they always carry something off. I dare say cousin Jemima is well set up again.

You only gave her an old gown and a muff? And you call me extravagant, do you? You twit me with spending eighteen pence at a tavern of a Saturday evening! What's the use of my saving the pence, when the pounds are flying about on the back of every old maid in the land? You treat Cousin Jemima very well; Mrs. Caudle. She will pay us another visit again very soon; there's no doubt of that. She don't get a gown and a muff at every place she goes to; I'm positive of that. In three months we'll see her again.

There's one thing, to be sure—when cousin Jemima is here, I don't have to sit down

to such a dinner as this. We have the fat of the land then. I can get enough to eat, and that's something.

My mind is made up, Mrs. Caudle, I tell you now. If I ever get rich enough to retire from business, I shall emigrate to Canada or New Holland. What's that? *You won't go?* Well, madam, you can stay. I dare say you prefer the society of cousin Jemima and your country relations to that of your husband. I shall let you take your choice. But I, Mrs. Caudle, will not be eaten out of house and home by your relatives: that you may depend on.

Here Caudle finished his pudding, and retired from the table, muttering:

"I suppose aunt Caroline will come next. I'll go to Canada, that's certain."

HARANGUE VI.

Mr. Caudle is dressing for Church—and puts on a Shirt with a Button off the Wristband.

MRS. CAUDLE! Mrs. Caudle! I say, Mrs. Caudle. *What is the matter?* Matter enough to provoke a saint. Here's a button off my wristband again, twice within a month have I been served in this way; twice within a month, do you hear?

You thought the house was on fire, Mrs. Caudle? If I had not the patience of Job I should be provoked to say something severe: I should indeed. Is it of no consequence to be treated in this manner twice in one month? Nay, madam, it is but three weeks since I had the same vexation. You don't remember it, I suppose, because I spoke mildly about it, because I let it go without showing how deeply I felt the neglect—neglect, Mrs. Caudle—that's the word. If there is one thing in the world more than another that is likely to ruffle the temper of a quiet, peaceable man, it is to find a button off his shirt. Every attentive and amiable wife knows this and provides against it. Do you think that Gordrow ever put on a shirt in his life, with a button off the wristband? Never! he has a wife that thinks more of him than of auctions and country relations.

And what am I to do Mrs. Caudle? *There's*

another shirt—that settles it—that makes all right again. It don't make all right, madam—I cannot forgive such treatment a second time; that's within a month, for I dare say that it has happened hundreds of times since you made me a happy man—a happy man, Mrs. Caudle. I cannot forgive such treatment quite so easily, I cannot overlook it quite so readily. I'm positive that I do everything for your comfort in my power. I slave all the week to provide the means of a respectable livelihood, and yet I must be tormented by such things. One minute's labor would have prevented it entirely. To the devil with the shirt.

Ain't I ashamed to go on so of a Sunday morning? Don't talk of shame to me, Mrs. Caudle. Oh! the button's off, you needn't look at it so sharply; looking won't put it on. Don't talk of shame to me; you are the person to be ashamed if there's any shame in you. I'm positive that your time is not so much occupied in the week that you can't examine my linen, and see that the buttons are all on. If I thought so, I would have them sent to a seamstress. When I was a bachelor, madam, and boarded out, such a

vexation did not happen to me once in a twelvemonth.

Presently it will be church time and I shall be half-dressed. *Whose fault will it be?* It will be your fault, Mrs. Caudle, it will be owing to the button off my shirt; we shall be late at church; and if there is anything in the world which I particularly detest, it is being late at church. I have said so before: I say so now. The service will have commenced, and we shall go tugging up the broad aisle, you Mrs. Caudle, and I and half a dozen children. A pretty figure we shall make going up the broad aisle after service has commenced! It isn't respectful to the rector nor the congregation either. Besides, I know its effect in other ways; people will say, 'Mr. Caudle comes late to church; Mr. Caudle must be a careless indolent man—Mr. Caudle is no doubt an irresponsible tradesman.' I am not a careless indolent man, madam, I am not an irresponsible tradesman—and you know it.

But I hate going late to church. What's that? *I needn't go to church this morning?* Pretty advice indeed, eh? You needn't advise me, Mrs. Caudle, do you hear? I will go to church—and I will take my family with me, early or late. Do you suppose that I intend to suffer my children to grow up without setting them the example of going to church? You are very particular sometimes about my example, madam. You talk about my swearing before the children, if I let slip an idle word. I'm positive that I never swore a wicked oath in my whole life. But with all your religion, Mrs. Caudle, you can tell me I needn't go to church. I will go to church however, unless this vexatious button detains me till the service is over. Curse the button.

What's that—what did you say, Mrs. Caudle? *Don't fly into a passion about such a trifle?* No, madam, it is not a trifle. How dare you call anything a trifle which affects

me so seriously. Every thing is a trifle that disturbs me—every thing. The other day when I came home from the shop and told you that John Simpson had called me a radical, you laughed and said that was a trifle. Eh? *I seemed so angry?* Well, madam, if there is anything on earth which I particularly detest, it is a radical, and you know it. And yet you thought it a trifle to be called one. But you made a great fuss the other day, when I cracked a joke on your Aunt Caroline's youngest boy having a fit. You thought that was very cruel and hard-hearted. What's a child's fit to having a button off one's shirt, I should like to know?

What are you muttering about? What do you say? *Don't go on all the morning about a paltry button?* Is that the way, madam, in which my complaints are to be viewed? Is that the way in which I am to be treated for exposing your neglect of my comfort? Instead of trying to excuse yourself, you blame me for telling you my mind. You have a pretty notion of the duty of a wife. You have altered very much though, Mrs. Caudle,—it didn't use to be so. If it was ignorance, madam, I could put up with these things better.

All I have got to say is, Betsy, don't let it happen again, don't let me find a button off my wristband, next Sunday. I don't threaten you, mind that. I'm a peaceable man, a patient man, as patient as Job, and you know it, Mrs. Caudle. And I won't stand this—*what will I do?* I'll do something, madam. I'll apply for a divorce to the Chancellor, and if the law won't protect me, I'll run away. I'll go anywhere and do anything, sooner than have my life teased out of me. I almost wish I was dead this blessed minute, that I do.

Twice in one month! it's abominable, it's perfectly outrageous, Mrs. Caudle.

H A R A N G U E V I I .

Mrs. Caudle has discharged her domestic, Bridget.

THE roast beef is delicious, my dear, delicious, and the tomato sauce gives it a flavor beyond description. You are a good cook, Betsy, when you set your hand to it fairly. I've said it before and I say it again.

I told Prettyman the other day when he was bragging of his wife's cookery, that it was all a hoax. I meant in comparison with yours, my dear.

But really, Mrs. Caudle, I must say that

the potatoes don't seem to be as rich and mealy as they generally are. What has Bridget been about? The roast beef and the tomato sauce are yours, my love, that I know; but Bridget must take care of herself or she will lose her credit with me. Yes, the potatoes are really spoiled. I must inquire into this. Bridget, Bridget, Bridget! What's that, my dear?

There's no use in calling Bridget. And why not, pray? She isn't deaf is she? I'm positive that I called loud enough to be heard half a mile. Where is Bridget? She has gone away, did you say? Gone where? What's that? *You have discharged Bridget?*

That accounts for it, Mrs. Caudle. You wouldn't say any more. I understand it all now. I understand now why the potatoes are spoiled, the very same Irish potatoes that Bridget used to send up rich and hot and mealy; just look at them, heavy and water soaked, and good for nothing. You can cook a sirloin of beef handsomely, I acknowledge that; but I say it, and I've said it a hundred times, that nobody in this house ever boiled a potatoe in comparison with Bridget. And you have discharged her. One thing is certain, we shall never have a decent potatoe on the table again. I must make up my mind to that. I must learn to relish a dinner without potatoes, for I had a great deal rather do without them entirely, than eat them, unless they are suitably boiled. There's a great art in cooking potatoes, I'm satisfied of that. And pray, Mrs. Caudle, for what reason have you discharged Bridget.

She's an impudent hussy. Bridget impudent! That's the very first time I ever heard of such a thing. A nicer, better behaved girl than Bridget we've never had about the house since we went to house-keeping. She was a tidy, handy creature as you would see in a month of Sundays. Impudent! I'm positive she never gave me an impudent or a cross word since she has been with us. Not one. What do you mean, Mrs. Caudle, by saying that Bridget is an impudent hussy? Words are actionable, and I don't know but it's actionable to say that a person is an impudent hussy. You must be a little careful of your tongue, madam, or you will get yourself into trouble, and me too. If there's an action for slander, I'll have to stand the brunt of it; remember that. A pretty thing it will be for a respectable tradesman to be brought into court to answer for his wife's indiscretion of language. Simpson has just been

caught in that way, and he told me the last time we met that he would not have endured the mortification of the thing for a thousand pounds.

What has happened, Mrs. Caudle? This seems to be a new thing altogether. What has Bridget said to you? There, you needn't go into a crying fit about it. Tell me at once, my dear. If she has really done or said any thing dreadful, I won't uphold her in it. I won't say another word. Tell me, eh, what was it? *You told Bridget to look after the potatoes?* Well. Very right Mrs. Caudle. I understand that. Well? *And Bridget told you to mind your own business?* Well, what more? What happened then? *You discharged the impudent hussy.*

Well, upon my word, Mrs. Caudle, you are a sensible woman. The neighbors may say Caudle didn't marry a fool, at any rate. And so you discharged Bridget, because she told you to mind your own business. And because Bridget happened to say mind your own business, without meaning any harm, I dare be sworn, I, madam, am to eat such potatoes as these all the rest of my life. For such nonsense I am to overload my stomach with heavy water-soaked potatoes, that would give the dyspepsy to a giant? But I shan't do it, madam. I'll not be murdered by inches, I can tell you.

Mind your own business? I don't see but that Bridget gave you very good advice, Mrs. Caudle. A pretty reason that for discharging a nice, tidy, handy creature, whom the children liked almost as well as their father or mother. I've told you a thousand times to mind your own business, when you've been interfering with my comforts. You are always interfering with other people—even with your own husband, and you know it. Why didn't you discharge me? Why not, madam?

And now what will be the upshot of this business? We shall lose Bridget; that's one thing. I shall have to get along as well as I can, without potatoes; that's another. Then, besides, Bridget will be offended—that's perfectly natural; and she will go around the city telling all kinds of stories about us—you and I, Mrs. Caudle, for I have to bear a share of all your doings. You know well that when Sally Ann left us, three years ago, she told all the neighbors that I was a man of violent temper. I, Job Caudle! To be sure people only laughed at her—the thing was too absurd. But it wasn't her fault that the most patient, peaceable man in the whole

city wasn't set down for a tiger. And so when Lucretia went away, last summer, she really told Mr. Prettyman that I drank more strong liquor than I ought to. Do I drink beyond reason, Mrs. Caudle; or did I then? Did I? Of course not: but who can stop the little-tattle of discharged domestics?

I dare say it will be just so with Bridget; although she is a nice, tidy, well-meaning creature. She is pretty, too, is Bridget, and when she is dressed up on Sunday to go to meeting, would be taken for a lady by any body. I suspect, Mrs. Caudle, that you envy Bridget a little. She is a little too handsome and a little too tidy in her dress to suit you exactly. Perhaps you were a little jealous of her, as well as of Miss Prettyman. It doesn't seem to be in the nature of things that a housewife would discharge such a domestic as Bridget merely for saying in a pet. *Mind your own business.*

I wonder who you will get next, Mrs. Caudle? You can't expect to hire another Bridget. I warrant me you'll have some ugly slattern that will keep us all in trouble. She won't stay long, either. No one stays long in this house. The truth of the matter is that you have an envious fault-finding disposition, and nobody can get along with you. You will be in hot water with your servants or your husband the whole time. It's one or the other for ever and ever. You seem to delight in it. Your domestics won't bear it. They leave you to get along as well as you can, and I should do the same thing if I were not the man that I am. Yes, madam, you can thank your stars that you have Job Caudle for a husband—that you can.

Here Caudle left the table, and as he reached the door, he said, "You needn't boil any potatoes for dinner to-morrow; I had rather have artichokes than such potatoes."

HARANGUE VIII.

Mrs. Caudle has obeyed the injunction of Mr. Caudle in the matter of Boiled Potatoes.

How's this, Mrs. Caudle. Eh? I don't see any potatoes on the table. Where are the boiled potatoes?

What do you say? *You haven't boiled any potatoes.* That's very strange. I can't make a dinner without boiled potatoes, and you know it. No potatoes—how do you account for that, Mrs. Caudle? Do I understand you, madam, do I understand you? *I told you yesterday not to boil any potatoes?* And you have obeyed me, that's it. Truly you are a very obedient wife. All that Job Caudle has to say is, Mrs. Caudle do such a thing and it is done. Mrs. Caudle do not such a thing, and it is left undone. I cannot complain, of course. I ought to be satisfied. I ought to be very much pleased, I suppose. But I am not satisfied, Mrs. Caudle, I am not pleased. You ought to be ashamed of your conduct, ashamed of it.

What did I mean by telling you not to boil any potatoes? What did I mean? I meant—you know what I meant well enough. Mrs. Caudle. If I meant anything, I meant that I wanted the potatoes boiled till they were soft and meally, as Bridget used to bring them on the table. If you had been a woman of right principles, it would have

been a triumph for you to have given me a dish of potatoes to-day as good as ever were put before the prince of the realm; that would have shown me that you cared to please me, that you could put yourself out of the way to humor my fancies.

You have done what I requested you to do? Oh! yes, you are a very obedient wife. You are a pattern of a wife, Mrs. Caudle. You are turning over a new leaf, it seems to me; it is not usual to find you so accommodating. Commonly you think it a duty to differ from me in opinion, and then take your own way in defiance of my wishes. You are coming round now. You are a kind, good soul, Mrs. Caudle.

But you can't blind me, madam. I understand it perfectly. I can see as far into a mill-stone as other people. You can't impose upon me. You have done this to tantalize and provoke me, I see that. Take care how far you go, Mrs. Caudle, I warn you. Take care how you practice on the temper of your husband, patient and forbearing and humble as he is. You could have had no other design than to irritate and torment me, to get me in a passion, to

make me curse like a trooper. You will fail this time, I shall keep cool.

Obedience, indeed. That's provoking. To have you do such a thing and then talk about obedience. It's all fudge, you don't intend to obey me, Mrs. Caudle.

How was it the other day when that old fool, Granny Gibson, brought in her dogwood syrup to give Julia for her cold? What's that, what are you saying? *Granny Gibson is not a fool?* There it is again; you now argue with me. I say she is an old fool, and if she ever brings any more of her dogwood syrup here, I'll pour it down her own throat.

She may go about the neighborhood poisoning other people's children, but she shan't poison mine, Mrs. Caudle. Well, she brought her stuff here for Julia! what did I tell you then? Eh, madam—what's that? *You don't remember?* I remember very well. I told you, I charged you not to give the child a single drop of it. But no sooner was my back turned, no sooner had I gone to the shop than you gave her a table-spoon full of it. What do you say? *You only gave her a tea-spoon full?* Well table-spoon full or tea-spoon full, it made the child ten times worse, and when I came home to supper I had to go for the doctor. *The doctor said it was the dinner and not the syrup that made her worse?* The doctor lied then, Mrs. Caudle. He would not have dared to tell me such a thing, he could not have dared to bamboozle me. I say it was the dogwood syrup that made the child worse. Don't contradict me. I won't be contradicted all the time. And I'm positive that I told you not to give any of Granny Gibson's trash to her upon any account. Where was your obedience then, Mrs. Caudle?

How was it, Mrs. Caudle, when I charged you to purchase Webb's Patent Washing Machine, in preference to Turner's? You went off the very same day and bought Turner's. How, madam? What do you say? *Aunt Caroline had tried both?* Suppose she had, what of that? *She said Turner's machine was the best?* Aunt Caroline gave her opinion, did she? No wonder then that my orders went for nothing. Aunt Caroline is the pink of perfection in your estimation. What she says is law and gospel. But I can tell you, Mrs. Caudle, if you thought a little

more of your husband's opinion and a little less of that of your country aunts, it would be more to your credit. You are a very obedient wife, truly. You bought Webb's patent, didn't you?

How was it last month when I told you to get blue and white curtains for the parlor windows? You got them, I suppose. No—you got the crimson and white and had them put up in spite of me. Eh? What do you say? *It isn't a man's business to be meddling with such matters?* It's a man's business to pay though. The bills always come in 'Job Caudle, debtor,' and the law compels Job to foot them. It's a pity if I ain't entitled to give an opinion in my own house. Yes, you got the crimson and white curtains. Aunt Caroline, I suppose, liked crimson and white better than blue and white. And now every time that I go into the parlor, I have my eyes blinded by great flaring red curtains that I wish with all my heart and soul were at the bottom of the Thames, yes, at the bottom of the Thames. Where was your obedience there, Mrs. Caudle?

Obedience! It's all nonsense. But I won't be served in this way. I will have potatoes for dinner, madam. I will have them properly boiled, too; and if you can't manage the point, I will. *What will I do?* I will look up Bridget again, and persuade her to come back to us. What's that, eh? *You won't live in the same house with Bridget?* You won't, Mrs. Caudle? That's a fine spirit! a lovely spirit for a Christian woman to indulge in. And you think it right to bear malice against a poor servant who happened to offend you? *You won't live in the same house with Bridget?* Well, upon my word, madam, if I choose to employ Bridget, I will do it. I won't tie you here, Mrs. Caudle. I won't lock you up. If you can find any place that you prefer to your husband's residence, you are welcome to go. Did you ever know any body to make any thing out of me by threatening me?

Caudle rose and went away muttering, "I'll be master in my own house; Bridget shall come back." He turned at the door, and said, "So, Mrs. Caudle, you are going to let two or three bundles of fine Irish potatoes rot in the cellar, are you? That's economy!"

H A R A N G U E I X.

Mrs. Caudle has brought the youngest Child to the Table.

THERE! Mrs. Caudle, there goes the cruet of oil on the table cloth. That's a pretty muss. Now I shall enjoy my dinner with a vengeance. What under the Heavens did you bring that brat to the table for?

Don't turn upon me in that way. No, madam, I am not ashamed to call my child a brat. I am not ashamed or afraid to speak my mind freely, and I don't intend to be. There's Wiggins: he's afraid of his wife; he dar'n't say his soul's his own. But you'll never make a Wiggins of me, Mrs. Caudle, and you needn't attempt it. I'm as patient as Job. I know that; but I won't be driven. Yes, yes, you may try to wipe it up, but you can't wipe out the grease spot in the table cloth, as big as the crown of my hat. It's enough to spoil the best dinner in the world. I ask you again, Mrs. Caudle, what under the Heavens did you bring that child to the table for?

He wanted to come? Very likely! A baby not a year old that can't say a single word. *He crowed to come?* Nonsense! You take up your own notions, and pretend to think that they are the young one's. You must be very wise in such things. Every time the little brat—brat, I say, Mrs. Caudle—makes a noise and fidgets about, you say he is crowing for something. The other day he crowed for my watch, you told me, and the upshot of it was that I had to get a new crystal for it. And now he has been crowing to come to the table. Look at that grease spot, madam! It's a great wonder the cruet didn't fall upon the carpet and get broken into a thousand pieces.

Suppose he did crow to come to the table. Are you going to indulge the whims and notions of the child, even before he can talk? Is that your government? Children should be kept in restraint, Mrs. Caudle, and not be permitted to do just as they please. A pretty house this will be in time, if your system of government prevails. But it shan't prevail. James, if you don't stop making such a clatter with your knife and fork, I'll box your ears—surely, do you hear? You do well to boast as you do sometimes of the mode in which you manage your children. I tell you that you are spoiling them by in-

dulgence. If they don't grow up wilful and obstinate and unruly, it won't be your fault.

But I'll take them in hand, Mrs. Caudle; I won't have them spoiled. I believe that I have some interest in them. Julia, what do you mean by talking to Sophy when I am speaking? Is that the manners your mother teaches you? Silence!—don't talk back to me. A pretty pass things are coming to in this house, I must confess. The children are setting up to rule, I really believe. Silence! I say. (Mr. Caudle brought his fist upon the table with great vehemence.) Who's crying now? Sophy, stop your crying, or I'll take you from the table and shut you up in the dark room. I'll have no crying at the table. Stop it, this minute! Do you hear me?

What's that? What do you say, Mrs. Caudle? *Don't frighten Sophy to death?* I am not frightening her at all: that's not my system. I don't govern children by frightening them, or spoil them by indulging them. The golden mean, Mrs. Caudle, that's my rule. Did I frighten you, Sophy? tell me, directly, or I'll—*No-o-o-o sir.* Why don't you speak out without blubbering, you little minx? Say no sir! What's that? what do you say, Mrs. Caudle? *The child is almost frightened out of its senses?* The child is not frightened. Do you mean to say that I have frightened her? Sophy, now hear me; you know I'm in earnest when I speak. Put down your hands—there; stop your crying—there. Now tell me, without any blubbering, or I'll give you something to blubber for. Have I frightened you? *No sir.*

There, Mrs. Caudle, there! Don't interfere with me again when I am striving to govern the children. Would you teach Sophy to lie, madam, by telling me that she is frightened when she is not? Or would you make her believe that her father is a monster—that he means to govern by fear and violence, and not by reason! That's for you, James; I promised you if you didn't stop the everlasting clatter of your knife and fork, and I'll always be as good as my word, you can depend upon that. Now mind your p's and q's. *What do I call that?* Caution of a fault, Mrs. Caudle. Spare the rod and spoil the child,

Soloman says, and I believe it. But I don't punish my children with temper. I do it justly and upon reflection, madam. When I punish them, they know I'm right, and they love me all the better for it.

Don't you love your father, Sophy—don't you? speak out, girl, or I'll— *Yes sir.* There's a sixpence for you—that's for speaking the truth. Always tell the truth, child, whatever other people may say to you.

There, Mrs. Caudle, that's what I call government. You don't seem to know what human nature is. You don't seem to reflect that children take notice of every thing that's going on, and that they are to be restrained within bounds by their parents. I should like to know what kind of a house this would be if your system was kept up. Just to think of bringing up children in the indulgence of all their whims and fancies! What did you ever know to come of such doings? There was Darley's family. That's a specimen.

One daughter ran away with a cabman; his oldest son became a play actor; and the youngest was sent to Botany Bay for forgery. I'll have better regulations in my house. James, Sophy, all of you, remember now, if you don't mind me, you know what you have got to expect.

And now, Mrs. Caudle, don't tell me any more about the baby's crowing to come to the table. He shan't come to the table for six months yet. Do you want every thing broken? Do you want the table cloth mussed up continually. Do you want my dinner spoiled regularly in this way? What sort of a dinner do you suppose I have made to-day, madam? I've had little chance to eat, I think.

Caudle continued talking without any reply from me, until he left the table, muttering: "You know nothing of the government of a family, Mrs. Caudle, really nothing—but I'll—"

H A R A N G U E X .

Mrs. Caudle has given an old coat to a beggar.

This is one of our old-fashioned dinners, Betsey,—boiled mutton, and vegetables flanked with a hot plum pludding: it is very nice, I must confess; very nice, indeed.

Oh! by the by, while I think of it, I want you to tell me what you have done with my bombasine coat. *It hangs up in the bedroom closet?* That's the new one; that's the coat I got this spring: but I mean the old one that I've kept to do garden work in for the last three or four summers;—what's become of it, my dear.

Eh! what's that, Mrs. Caudle? *You have given it away!* and pray, whom have you given it to? I'm positive Cousin Jemima couldn't have wanted my old bombasine coat.

What did you say, Mrs. Caudle? Eh! *Nothing?* Well, madam, nothing don't answer my question. Will you answer me? There now you've got one of your sulky fits on again. When you know you are wrong, you put on airs and say nothing: it isn't so always. If I want to go to sleep at night, you'll talk by the hour, in spite of me: you are as

contrary a woman as ever lived. Eh! Mrs. Caudle? So you won't talk to me, your husband; you are too good to talk to me, I suppose. Perhaps you think I like sulky women: but I do not, madam. If there is anything on earth which I particularly detest, it is a sulky woman. Am I ever sulky? do I ever sit mum because I am a little out of sorts, and refuse to answer a plain simple question? I never did such a thing in my life, and you know it.

Well, you didn't answer my question because—because—because—*it wasn't asked respectfully!* Oh! wasn't it? what a brute I must be! Next, you'll be telling the neighbors that I don't speak to you respectfully; that I don't treat you as I ought to. But you won't make any body believe that I, Job Caudle, as patient and good-tempered a man as ever lived in the Great Crossing, have done anything out of the way in my family: you'll only get laughed at if you try it. I have a character, madam; I'm known: and though I say it myself, the more I'm known the better

I'm liked. Ask Prettyman—ask any of the Skylarks. Oh ho! I didn't put the question respectfully. Well then, let me try it again,—Will you have the goodness, Mrs. Caudle, to tell me whom you have given my old bombasine coat to?

To a beggar? Upon my word, very handsome, indeed. *To a beggar!* my coat to a beggar. Eh! what's that? *The coat was all in rags?* The coat was patched here and there, and it was a little torn perhaps; but it answered my purpose. *You were tired of seeing me wear it?* and so you gave it away to a beggar. I will thank you hereafter to let me dispose of my own clothes, Mrs. Caudle. What would you think if I should give away your gowns, or caps, or bonnets, to beggarwomen in your absence? I shouldn't sleep for a week, I should hear of it night after night, I'll warrant me.

The coat answered my purpose if it was ragged; I felt comfortable in it: it was as easy as an old shoe. I like to patter about in the garden of a fine morning after breakfast, and that coat was just the thing. I wouldn't have sold it for twice its value. What's that, eh? *It wasn't worth an old brass farthing?* There's a brass farthing, madam. Take it, and get me just such a coat, if you can find one: perhaps you can buy it back of the beggar you gave it to; though it's more likely that he has sold it for gin long before now. No, Mrs. Caudle; you'll never see that coat again. *So much the better?* so much the better, is it?

I suppose I don't look stiff enough in an old coat to please you; I suppose you are ashamed of me, Mrs. Caudle, unless I am fixed up in my Sunday best. You ought to have married a dandy, and not a plain, sober, respectable tradesman. There was Mortimer Eccleston; he would just have suited you. He sported a black coat and a gold watch every day in the week: you would have taken him for the Marquis of Westminster or the Earl of Jersey, if you had met him in Hyde Park. To be sure, he was in the Gazette last August; but that's nothing. Dress and show, that's all a woman looks at: your spruce, dandyish fellows that arn't worth sixpence will be followed and looked after, when a respectable tradesman that minds his busi-

ness and has his credit on 'Change, is only laughed at. But I was never cut out for a dandy, Mrs. Caudle; and what's more, I don't intend to be put in the Gazette, if I can help it.

Don't talk to me any more about economy, madam: it's ridiculous, perfectly ridiculous. Don't talk to me any more about lending five pounds to a friend. The five pounds were returned to me this very morning: but when shall I ever see my bombasine coat again?—never. You have given it away to a perfect stranger—a beggar. Such economy as yours would ruin a prince. I understand you: when you want to cut off any of my little comforts,—they're few enough, heaven knows,—then you begin to preach economy; the Skylarks cost this, and the Skylarks cost that: but you never think of the pounds which are thrown away at home.

And you must give my coat to a beggar. Do you know that by such conduct you are encouraging beggary, madam? you are learning the poor to depend upon charity, and not upon industry? It is really wicked. Did you ever see me give away anything to a beggar, Mrs. Caudle? even so much as a halfpenny or a farthing? The workhouse is the place for beggars, and not the public streets. The law sets its face against them, and punishes them severely. If you had sent out for a policeman, and had the beggar arrested, you would have done your duty: instead of that, madam, you have encouraged him in breaking the law; and he'll be here again, I warrant you. All the beggars in the city will soon find out the place; we shall be surrounded with 'em night and day.

No; I shall not eat my dinner and leave the beggars alone: I will not wear my brown nankin jacket in the garden. *What will I wear?* Sure enough, that's my trouble. But what do you care for the trouble that I'm put to; not a button. I must wear something: there's no use in talking any more about the coat; that's gone: I must think of something to wear. Ain't you ashamed of yourself, Mrs. Caudle, to put me to all this inconvenience for nothing? —

As Caudle left the room, he vociferated loudly,—It won't do for me to find a beggar hanging round the house—I'll fix him.

H A R A N G U E X I .

Mrs. Caudle has quarrelled with her neighbor Mrs. Tompkins.

What's the matter now, Mrs. Caudle? Something has happened, I can tell that by your looks; what is it?

Mrs. Tompkins? Well, what of Mrs. Tompkins? She isn't very sick, is she? she isn't dead, is she? What's that? *You wish she was?* You wish that Mrs. Tompkins was dead? How can you say so, Mrs. Caudle? how can you, as a Christian woman, express such a wish about one of your neighbors? I'm astonished: and Mrs. Tompkins is such a pleasant, sociable woman; no pride, no affectation about her. But I see how it is: you've had a falling out with Mrs. Tompkins, you've had a dispute with her. Yes; I've had the mystery. Here's another pretty mess—a quarrel between neighbors. If there's anything on earth which I particularly detest, it is a quarrel between neighbors; and you know it, Mrs. Caudle.

How did it happen—tell me that. Let me see who's in the right, and who's in the wrong. Go on—well!--you were gossiping and talking; I understand that. All the mischief in this world pretty much comes from women's tongues: they never know when they have said enough; they never think that anybody knows anything but themselves. Well, eh! *Mrs. Tompkins said that her children were the best-behaved of any children in the neighborhood.* Well; and you said—*That she was very much mistaken.* Yes. You needn't tell me any more; I see into it all. You stood up for your children, and she stood up for hers; and all sorts of hard words were said between you.

Here's a quarrel that will keep two families living door and door in hot water for a twelve-month: and about the children too. They're all bad enough, Mrs. Caudle; you needn't have got into a quarrel about their goodness. Yes; I know perfectly well that little Pete Tompkins threw the dead cat into our pig-trough, and that Almira broke Sophy's doll into a hundred pieces. But then how do we know all the mischief that our young ones do when they are out of doors: there isn't sixpence to choose between the whole of them, I dare say. You were very wrong, Mrs. Caudle, to quarrel with a neighbor about such nonsense: you ought to keep your temper

under a little more subjection. Look at me! do I fly into a passion at every trifling remark, and get myself into trouble with my neighbors.

How's that? eh! Ah! you're hinting now at the muss I had with Levi Marks: that was another affair altogether. He told me that I knew nothing about planting cabbages. He might just as well have called me an ignoramus and a fool: I won't be called a fool by any body. Any reasonable person would have said that I was perfectly justified in resenting such an insult. I did resent it, and I'm not ashamed of it. But this quarrel of yours with Mrs. Tompkins is a silly quarrel, and I've no doubt you're to blame. Every body knows that Mrs. Tompkins is almost as peaceable in her disposition as I am: the neighbors won't believe that she began it; see if they do.

And then it will look so ungrateful in you. When you were sick, Mrs. Caudle, with your last baby, who was so kind and attentive to you as Mrs. Tompkins? She nursed you as if she had been your sister: I'm positive she did. She sat up with you once or twice, and prepared your medicines for you as nicely as the doctor could have done it. And then her preserves and her jellies that she brought in to tempt your appetite with;—don't tell me that you've done the same things for her, time and time again: I dare say you have; but does that do away with everything between neighbors and friends. People will talk, madam;—you'll get a fine name, I promise you, in the whole street.

Where shall we borrow a wheelbarrow now? I ask you that, Mrs. Caudle. Of course all intercourse will be stopped between the families,—that follows of course. The men must take up the women's quarrels whether or no, or else the deuce is to pay. If I want a wheelbarrow, I may go two blocks before I will find one. Eh? *Buy one?* That's easy said: we're made of money, I suppose; we've got nothing to do but draw on the Bank of England for any amount that's wanted. *The Tompkinses have borrowed our bathing-tub as often as we've had their wheelbarrow?* What does that prove? I'm sure they were welcome. What am I to do now

for a wheelbarrow? that's the question. But then you don't want the wheelbarrow; it's I that am to be worried and perplexed, it's I that am to be bothered about it—what do you care?

And if Pete Tompkins is such a bad boy, mind I don't deny his guilt in the matter of the dead cat, there's no knowing what will be the end of it. He'll get worse and worse when he hears how you feel towards him. His mother will tell him everything, you may be sure of that. Mothers always do tell their children improper things. Mrs. Caudle, this very quarrel may be the ruin of us. I shouldn't wonder at all if the house were set on fire; not at all, madam. Boys are boys, and wicked boys stop at nothing when they are provoked. I shan't sleep easy in my bed for a month to come; I shall be dreaming of nothing but fires and incendiaries. It will be lucky if there should be nothing but dreams, very lucky indeed.

There's a good customer lost too: Tompkins has traded with me ever since he has lived in the street. His bill last quarter, Mrs. Caudle, was six pound five. That's all over: he'll take his wife's part, of course. What's that? what do you say? *He'll act differently from other people, then?* That's very kind of you, madam; that's intended for me, I suppose. Don't I always take your part when you are right, Mrs. Caudle? I don't sustain what is wrong, madam, even in my own fami-

ly: Job Caudle can't do it. Yes; we shall lose Tompkins' trade, and that's a pretty penny in the course of a year. He'll go to Jobbins'. He knows that I detest Jobbins, and that Jobbins hates me; and he'll give his trade to Jobbins, as sure as the earth goes round the sun.

If that's all, I shall be glad; but I'll wager that a lawsuit will grow out of it yet. I know what a tongue you've got, Mrs. Caudle, when you're out of the sulks; and you'll say something actionable before this quarrel is over. I warn you not to do it: I can't afford to go to law, letting alone the vexation and the disgrace of it. I see how it will be, though. You won't be satisfied till I am a ruined man—that will please you, I don't doubt.

Now just see the upshot of this morning's doings: You have quarrelled with your nearest neighbor, and our social intercourse will be broken off entirely; you will be charged with ingratitude; I shall have to go two squares to borrow a wheelbarrow; the house will be set on fire; Tompkins will trade with Jobbins instead of me; and a lawsuit will grow up that will keep half a dozen lawyers busy the Lord knows how long; and all this because two silly women choose to quarrel about their children. It's ridiculous, upon my word.

Caudle rose from the table, and slammed the door violently after him, without adding to his nonsensical harangue.

HARANGUE XII.

Mrs. Caudle has run up a bill of twenty-five pounds eight, at Mr. Draper's Thread and Needle Store.

Mrs. Caudle; it seemsto me you might have bought a pine apple or two for desert to-day. I saw some very fine ones at the fruit-store opposite. Eh? what, *pine apples are very expensive*. Are they indeed? Then are other things very expensive too, Mrs. Caudle, but you don't seem to mind that. How many pine apples do you think might be bought for twenty-five pounds? Eight—you are very good at figures, cipher it out if you please. How many pine apples for the twenty-five pounds eight shillings?

You don't understand me, I suppose, Mrs.

Caudle? You are very dull and stupid when you choose to be; but I am not so easily imposed upon as you think for. I know some things before I became acquainted with you, and you'll find it out some of these days. What's that? *What is the matter now?* Matter enough, Madam. It's well for you that I am a patient man, that I always inquire and convince myself that I'm right before I take any step of importance.

I won't do any thing in a passion. I am principle against it. If I was not, I would not answer for myself at the present moment.

Mrs. Caudle, do you know one Simon Draper? *The owner of the thread and needle store in Woodford street?* The very same—you know him, I perceive?

Well, madam, here is a bill of twenty-five pounds eight shillings, which he alleges that I owe him for laces, ribbons, silk, and cotton thread, pins and needles. Is it right? Eh? What? *You dare say it is?* The devil you do. Mrs. Caudle; do mean to say that you have run up a bill of twenty-five pounds eight shillings, at a thread and needle store within the last six months. I'll apply for a divorce to-morrow. I'll go to the Chancellor to-morrow. I told Draper's clerk this morning that it could not be. I told him that it was a mistake—that my family had never had a tithe of these things, and yet you tell me that you dare say the bill is right.

What's that? *I told you to trade at Draper's?* Yes, Mrs. Caudle, I did tell you that you might get a few nick-nacks at Draper's, on my credit.—Draper trades with me, and its no more than right to reciprocate favors. But, good God, madam, did I suppose that you were going to buy out his entire stock of goods? Did I suppose that you were going to dress out the whole family, children and all, in laces and ribbons? Did I suppose that you were going to run up a bill of twenty-five pounds eight. . . No, madam, I did not imagine any of these things. I thought that there was some reason, some judgment, some prudence, about you. Draper trades with me, Mrs. Caudle; but the whole amount of his bill for six months is eight pounds twelve. So that I am actually in his debt the enormous sum of sixteen pounds sixteen shillings. I call it an enormous sum, madam, and it is so. A balance of sixteen pounds sixteen shillings for bobbinet and needles.

It can't be Betsey, it can't be. It is impossible that you should have had all of these things. I'll run over a few of the items, just to satisfy you that there must be a mistake. I'm positive there's a mistake, somewhere's. Their's another man in the city, by the name of Job Caudle, and he's mixed the two accounts together. Eh? don't you think so, Betsey? Eh? Don't provoke me now, Betsey. If there ever was a time in all my life when I felt more like being vexed than now, I don't remember it.

Seventeen yards of lilac ribbon, at one shilling per yard. Seventeen shillings. Do you remember that? Eh? *It's right?* Is it? Well, I don't think its right, Mrs. Caudle.

What under the heavens could you want of seventeen yards of lilac ribbon? Seventeen yards—that's the whole width of this street, upon my word. Oh! you bought it to trim the summer hats of the children and yourself?

Here's something moderate. Six yards of French lace, at eight shillings per yard; two pounds eight. I'm positive that can't be right. There's a mistake of two pounds eight, my dear. Eh? What? *You remember the French lace?* And pray, madam, what did you want of six yards of French lace, at eight shillings per yard?

Mrs. Caudle, have you set about ruining me in earnest? But you shan't do it! You shan't do it! If the law won't protect me, I'll protect myself; I'm resolved on that!

Needles, two shillings, pins, assorted, three shillings; sewing silk, fancy colors, six shillings and eight pence. Needles three shillings. I'm positive that Mrs. Rose don't use more needles in her great milliner's-shop.

You don't say a word, Betsey; so its all right, I suppose. I'll have no more of it. I'm sick of it—heartily sick of it. I have made a fool of myself. I told Draper's clerk, that it could not be—that I would pledge my life there was a mistake in the bill.

Shall I tell you why I have said that, Mrs. Caudle? I knew that you were an extravagant woman, notwithstanding all you noise about economy. But I did not think you were so base as to run up a bill of twenty-five pounds eight, at a thread-and-needle store, in six month's! I did not dream of that. If you were a dutchess, madam, instead of being the wife of a plain tradesman, the thing would be preposterous.

Do you know how much twenty-five pounds eight shillings is, Mrs. Caudle? It is a large sum—a very large sum. There are many families in the kingdom, who find meat, drink, clothing, and lodging for less money per annum, than twenty-five pounds eight shillings; and yet that sum has been squandered in a tradesman's family in six month's for needles and sewing-silk. Twenty-five pounds eight; why, madam, it's my candid opinion, that you never saw as much money in all your life, till you married patient Job Caudle. People may well call him patient, if he stands this.

Betsey Caudle, I had it on the end of my tongue to disown you, to call you Betsey Wigstaff; if I don't apply for a divorce to-morrow, it will be for the sake of the dear children. One thing, however, I will say, and do say: the credit at Draper's is withdrawn. If you

want any more French laces, you must pay for them when you get them.

I did intend to have taken you and the children to Brighton this summer, but that's all over. I must retrench somewhere until I have saved the twenty-five pounds—that you have squandered so foolishly. Just to think what a fuss you were making, because I spent eighteen pence a week with the Skylarks, when you were running up a bill of twenty-five pounds eight shillings, for needles. Yes, we shan't go to Bath this season.

What's that? say that again? *The noise about the bill is an excuse for putting a stop to the excursion?* It's a fib, Mrs. Caudle, a downright fib. Oh! you may get angry, as angry as you please; for once madam, I am angry myself—I acknowledge it. I have lost my temper, Mrs. Caudle, but if ever a patient, forbearing, injured man, had a just and sufficient cause, I am that individual.

Here Caudle retired from the table in a great huff, muttering as far as the street door over and over, twenty-five pounds eight.

HARANGUE XIII.

Mrs. Caudle is going to spend a few days with dear Mother.

Now I think of it, Betsey, I'll just mention it. Bill Davis, an old friend of mine, is in town, and I intend to ask him to dine with me to-morrow. You must do your best, my dear; Bill has seen the world, and knows what good living is. He's an old bachelor with plenty of money, and a little attention to him may not be a bad investment. For your own credit, Betsey, I hope that everything will be nice.

Eh! what? *I must put it off?* and why must I put it off, Mrs. Caudle? I can't put it off. Oh! *You're going to spend a few days with dear mother?* Well, Betsey, I don't want to prevent you from going to see your mother; it's quite natural that you should take some interest in the old woman. Let me see;—to-day is Monday, to-morrow is Tuesday; we shall have Davis to dine with us to-morrow. The next day is Wednesday; you can go on Wednesday, my dear. What's that? what do you say? *You promised to go on Tuesday?* Well, suppose you did. *Mother will expect you?* Poh! the old woman can wait a day or two without falling into fits: I dare say she's not very anxious to see you. What difference will it make whether you go on Tuesday or Wednesday? What? *You've postponed your visit two or three times to please me?*

Now do you see, Mrs. Caudle, I don't consider it very handsome in you to be throwing up such things. If you have postponed your visit, madame, you did it of your own free will; I didn't lock you up to keep you at home, as Walker does his wife.

Besides, I am very desirous of having Davis

to dine with me; I want to show him my house, my garden, my children, and have a talk about old times. Well, says I to myself, as I was coming from the shop, I'll step in at the Tontine this afternoon, and invite him to dinner to-morrow. Eh! what's that, Mrs. Caudle? *There's no use in talking?* What do you mean by that? I don't understand you:—what is the reason there's no use in talking? *Because you are determined to go to-morrow?*

This is a pretty piece of business, I must confess. You are determined to go on a pleasure visit, and let me entertain my friends as well as I can. How do you suppose that Jane is to cook such a dinner as I should like to set before Davis? Jane is a miserable cook, madam, and you know it; she scarcely knows how to boil a potato. If you had not quarrelled with Bridget, she might have got along with it. It isn't reasonable to think that Jane will give us anything fit to eat. And then it will look so strange to Davis when he learns that you went off on a visit the very same day that he was invited to dine with me; no doubt he will expect to see you at the head of the table; no doubt he will have a curiosity to see my wife,—that's perfectly natural in an old chum. Don't you suppose, Mrs. Caudle, that I want him to see me with my wife and children around me; to look up to me as the head of a thriving family? Don't you suppose that I want him to think me a happy dog—a lucky dog? Remember, Betsey, Bill Davis is an old bachelor, and he's rich.

So it seems to me, my dear, that you had

better postpone your visit till Wednesday. What odds will one day make? Eh! what do you say? *You will go to-morrow, and that's the end on't?* And what am I to do about Davis, Mrs. Caudle? Have a little reason; you used to make some pretensions to sense and judgement. I don't see what you can be thinking about now. Dinners don't fly ready cooked upon the table. What am I to do with Davis? tell me that. Eh! *Invite him when you come back?*

Very well, madam, very well; you will go to-morrow, and that's the end on't. No matter what my wishes are, no matter what my plans are, you have made up your mind, and I must submit. I'm master in my own house, truly. An obedient wife, are you? a very obedient wife. This would be a scene for Davis, now wouldn't it. How he would envy me. He's always railing against matrimony, and this would last him as a text for a twelve-month. When we were young men together, he used to warn me against it. Never get married, said he, often and often, unless you wish to get into trouble; it's a worse life than cats and dogs. You might stand it, Job, he would say, for you are a patient fellow, and can submit to things which would set me in a blaze. But matrimony is dreadful, believe me. I didn't believe him though. I got a kind of hankering after it. You will go to-morrow, and that's the end on't. Mrs. Caudle, I'm heartily sorry that I did not believe him. It would have been a lucky thing for me, if I had heeded to Bill Davis.

If you go, Mrs. Caudle, it will not be the end on't. I shall remember it one while, I can tell you. I acknowledge that I am a patient man, a peace-loving man, but there's a limit. You are imposing on me a little too far. I can't stand every thing, and I won't stand it. What the devil do you think I'm made of. *Don't swear so before the children?* I'll swear as much as I please. That's the way you answer me, and that's the way you must expect to be answered. Tit for tat, I say; and so you'll find it, madam. Next, you'll want me to do something, and you'll come palavering around me with your soft sawder. See if you gain any thing by it. If you do, Job Caudle is a flat, and you may spread it through the city.

You shan't disappoint me with your perverseness, Mrs. Caudle. Davis shall dine with me to-morrow, and he shall have a good dinner. I'll take him to the Crown-and-Anchor. To be sure, what with the private apartment, the dinner, and the wine, there will be a pretty bill; but if my own house is shut against me, what can I do? It won't ruin me, I dare say, and if it does, you don't care. I'll tell Davis the whole story; he will laugh at me I suppose, and crow over me. I can't help that; I must give him some reason for taking him to a tavern to dine, and the truth might as well come out first as last. He's a keen fellow, and would have it out somehow or other, if I tried to conceal it.

Eh! what's that? Mrs. Caudle. *Mother expects you to-morrow?* That's enough, of course; what's your husband to you in comparison with your mother. I don't doubt if it was aunt Caroline, or cousin Jemima, it would be the same thing. You are so fond of the society of your relations, that I wonder you don't want to live with them entirely. If that is the case, don't mind me; I can get along well enough on my own hook. The Caudles were always able to take care of themselves. Go and see your mother, and stay as long as you please; you have my full permission; but Davis and I will dine at the Crown-and-Anchor, that's certain.

What's that you are muttering about my coming home drunk, and setting the house on fire? Did you ever know me to come home drunk, Mrs. Caudle? did you ever know me to set the house on fire? One would think you had done enough in withstanding my wishes, without undertaking to slander me. How dare you talk so of me before the children. Is that the way you take to make them disrespectful to me? I can see what you are after; you don't want Bill Davis to dine with me at all. No matter how much I set my mind on a visit from a friend, that's nothing to you; you are a selfish —

Here, for my peace sake, I gave up the point, and told Caudle that I would postpone my visit to mother, till Wednesday, if he would promise to get up nothing more as a reason for further delay.

H A R A N G U E X I V .

Mr. Caudle has a friend to dine with him.

Davis, will you take a bit of the turkey ? What do you prefer—a wing, and a slice of the breast. Eh ! will that do ?

Mrs. Caudle, my dear, help Mr. Davis to some of the vegetables ; those beets are very nice, very nice indeed. Try one of the mangoes. I'll put my wife against the world, Davis, for pickling mangoes. You liked mangoes of old, I remember that.

Those were great times, when you and Tom White, and Charley Sandford, and I, used to go once or twice a week to honest Jimmy Falkner's, to sup. Charley sung a good song, and Tom, you know, had lots of fun in him. What's that ? *Job Caudle wasn't slow?* Ha ! ha ! my dear, do you hear what Mr. Davis says ? that I wasn't slow in the old times when we were clerks together.

I have changed though, Davis, very much, very much, indeed, whether for the better or the worse. I've sobered down since then. Why you can't tell how many times I have been taken for a dissenter. Don't laugh at me Davis—it's so, isn't it, my dear. My temper's just the same that it was, nothing puts me in a fury ; and so I keep up a good figure, and a round jolly face. Its your less fault-finding people, that look as though they had been fed on pickles from their childhood. In other respects, though, I am different from the Job Caudle of the olden times. I've got to be a regular methodical business man, always in the shop or at home.

Matrimony has done it my friend. There goes your scornful laugh. I remember how you used to go on about matrimony. Mrs. Caudle you mustn't think any less of Mr. Davis, for what he may think on this subject ; it's a kink of his, my dear ; and you've stuck to it, Davis, from first to last, that I'll admit. But you've mistaken, though, and you'll find it out before you are twenty years' older. There's nothing like a wife to keep every thing straight. Eh ? what do you say ? *You like to keep yourself straight?* I didn't mean that exactly ; of course you don't want to be restrained of your liberty—of course not. No man of any spirit will be ; but then to advise you. Eh ? what's that, Davis ? *You can get along very well without Curtain Lectures?*

Ha ! ha ! my dear do you hear that ; friend, Davis, actually believes that its a common thing for wives to read their husbands Curtain Lectures. Isn't it funny ; I can assure you my friend, that's all a humbug. A man has nothing to dread from a good wife. She's a mine, a treasure. What ? eh ? what do you say ? *You would like to see one?*

Look at my wife, Mr. Davis—she's not as handsome, perhaps, as she was when a girl. Time tells on all of us. You remember her when she was Betsey Wigstaff. You needn't shake your head, for I know you do. Ha ! you used to quiz me about her awfully. You'd meet me of a morning sometimes, with a grave face, and say : Are you going to the races, to-day, Job—how's Bets ? That was a joke of his, my love, on your name. Look at my wife ; isn't she as neat as a pin, and isn't her house like wax-work, from the garret to the cellar. I don't like to talk up my own goods, but if there's a man in the world that has a good wife, it's Job Caudle. Drop in once in a while, as you pass, and see how every thing goes on like clock-work. You'll envy me, I think.

I was a poor man till I got married ; always spending what I made, in one way or another ; then I began to save a little. I saw the necessity of it—but I really believe I should have been a poor man to this day, if I had kept single. I don't mean to say that I've got much money now, but there's a trifle laid up against a rainy day. I know you have made a fortune without marrying. Yes, I know that ; but you had capital when you commenced, and capital's every thing. Any man of good habits can get along with a snug capital. It's a deuced hard thing to come by honestly. Now don't laugh at me, Davis ; I really think that the best capital a poor man can start with, is a good wife. That's my vote ; I've tried it, and I know. A man gets attached to his woman, and spends his evenings there, instead of being at the taverns and theatres ; he's never out late at night, and he learns to rise early in consequence. You had better give up your odd notions, and try matrimony, yet.

What did you say, Davis ? *You'd as soon*

think of trying arsenic. Ha! ha! Mrs. Caudle, my love, you mustn't get offended at my friend, Davis, for slighting matrimony; it was always his way. He's got a list at home, of all his married acquaintances, arranged according to the happiness or misery of their conditions. How many happy couples are there in your list, Davis? Eh? what? *None!* Put down Job Caudle and his wife, then, the moment you get to your lodgings. You shan't circulate that slander against matrimony any more. Put us down, do you hear?

You are too bad, Mr. Davis, indeed you are. Have you never been ill, my friend? What? *Often?* There, now, and how can you get taken care of when you are ill? *You hire a nurse?* That's all very well, but what's a nurse to a fond tender wife who is deeply interested in you? A nurse don't care for you, except as you pay for the service. She can't sooth your pains and sympathise with you as a wife can. How's that? What do you say? *You don't want any body cuddling around you when you are ill?*

It is n't fair to look on things in that light, Davis. You'll never get married though, that's clear. You'll stick to that, I'm convinced. I'm positive that you have had chances enough. There was Molly Fairbanks that married Captain Inmyn, thought the world of you. You might have had her just as well as not, and a snug fortune to boot. Then there was Miss Paddon too. You remember her. And I don't doubt, at this very minute, you might have your pick of a dozen as good women as there are in the city. It's a pity, is n't it, my love, that Mr. Davis should have taken up such notions in his early youth?

Why, Davis, just look at me, just look at my wife, just look at those rosy-cheeked young ones. Arnt I a happy dog? Arnt my wife a fortunate woman? And what do you think of the children? Have n't I reason to be proud of them? What's that? Eh? *They're very much like other people's children?* Like other people's children? You're mistaken in that, my friend. I've seen a great many children in my life, but I never knew such children.

There's little Sophy now, only three years old, a bright little thing. Sophy, what is this gentleman's name? Eh? What? Davis did you say? *Father called him Bill Davis yesterday.* Hear the little rogue. What a memory she has got! What an astonishing memory! I don't know but I might have called you Bill Davis in telling some of our old frolics to my wife. And she's so quick. It's just the way with all of them. They're very different from other people's children, I can assure you.

There's the baby, sitting in the high chair by the table. We bring him to the table because it's so pleasant to have all our little ones around us and see them enjoy themselves. How he crows! To be sure he knocks the oil civit or the salt-cellar over once in a while, but what's that? The little chap don't mean any harm. And what an eye he's got! Did you ever see such an eye in your life, friend Davis. Eh? *His eye is well enough, but he seems fretful?* He's only crowing—its a way he has of asking for what he wants. Mrs. Caudle, baby's crowing for the salt-cellar; let him have it, dear, he can't do much damage. There's plenty of salt in the ocean, if he does spill it.

After dinner I want to show you my little garden. I putter in it every day more or less. There are flowers, fruits and vegetables in it. It's small of course, but I take a great pride in it. You see how I'm fixed, my old friend. Don't you think now that I'm better off than I would have been if I had believed your notions? What? *You don't know?* Mrs. Caudle, love, do you hear that? Mr. Davis doesn't know! He's a wonder! Don't you know, my friend, that I've told you many a time that you were a strange incalculable being? It's so. You'll visit my little garden after dinner, wont you, Davis? Of course you will.

A glass of wine with you. Matrimony for ever! Eh? No—ha! ha! An odd fellow!

As Mr. Davis passed my chair on retiring from the table he whispered, 'I've heard Job Caudle talk before this, he can't bamboozle me.'

H A R A N G U E X V.

Mr. Caudle finds a fly in his Soup.

HERE, James, quick! take my soup; quick! do you hear? pour it in the swill-pail.

What a careless blockhead you are, James. There! begone with it. You've done mischief enough; you've spilled at least a tablespoonful of the greasy stuff on my clean pantaloons; I shall have to change them as soon as dinner is over—that is, if I am able to get any dinner that I can eat. Don't stop to contradict me, you saucy, unmannerly boy; I'll take you away from Johnson's Grammar School this very week. You are getting worse and worse every day of your life; but I'll put you where you'll learn to mind your p's and q's, my boy. Begone with the soup, I tell you.

What are you bawling at me for, Mrs. Caudle? Eh! *What's the matter? what's the matter with the soup?* Matter enough, madam, to vex a saint. What do you suppose the matter is? there's a fly in the soup, Mrs. Caudle!

What's that? *You thought it was poisoned?* Very well! that's all you have to say about it. *You thought it was poisoned?* You must think that I am a meek patient man. What do you say? *I'm always telling you so?* Don't provoke me now, Betsey; I am a meek patient man, but I can't bear everything. I wish the soup had been poisoned; I had rather by all odds that you would serve me a dish of soup with poison in it, than to serve it up with dead flies. If there is anything on earth which I particularly detest, it is to have flies in my soup; and you know it, Mrs. Caudle.

This thing has happened before; it isn't the first time. It happened last summer just about this time of the year; I remember it perfectly well. What? *You shouldn't wonder?* I understand that slur. You thought it was mighty hard, because I threw the soup out of the window. Perhaps you like soup with flies in it; I don't. I eat things as they are brought on the table without much fuss—when I can't smell, or taste, or see any impurity, I take it for granted that it's all right; it's the best way, Mrs. Caudle, if a man wants to eat at all. But a dead fly swimming about in your platter is a little too much for faith. Bah! it makes me sick to think of it. It as-

tonishes me that you should overlook such a thing; you, who pretend to be such a nice housekeeper.

What do you say, Mrs. Caudle? *Will I have another dish of the soup?* No, madam; I will not. I shan't want to see or taste a particle of soup in a fortnight; I shan't see a dish of soup in a month without looking for dead flies. That's a nice business, truly—that I, who am really fond of soup, and don't know how to make a dinner without it, should be cut off from it in such a way. If I was in a boarding-house and was served so, I would quit it in a moment. The old saw says, 'what can't be cured must be endured;' and I suppose I must bear it.

One word I have to say, Betsey; don't let this happen again; I hold you responsible for it that it shall never happen again. If it should happen again, I should think that it was done on purpose: that would vex me. I couldn't have the slightest respect for a woman that would put flies in my soup on purpose; I wouldn't live with such a woman. There isn't a person in the street that would blame me for any course I might take. What's that? *You haven't thought of putting flies in the soup?* I dare say not; but don't let it happen again.

Bless me! what noise is that? James, come here this instant. What have you been about? Eh! how's that? *The plate slipped out of your hand?*—well!—*and fell upon the hearth?* It's broken in a hundred pieces, of course. You careless good-for-nothing blockhead; wasn't it enough that you spilled a half-pint of the greasy soup on my pantaloons, but you must go and break a dish worth two shillings at the least? You're improving finely! I've the greatest notion that I ever had in my life to give you such a trouncing, that you would remember it till your dying day. Do you hear? you're a careless good-for-nothing blockhead, and you'll live to be a disgrace to your family I don't doubt. I never did such a thing when I was a boy, never; I shouldn't have dared to do it; but we are getting into fine ways now-a-days.

You needn't think to escape punishment, sirrah, because I don't box your ears, or tan

you as I ought to do. I'll try another method with you. I promised you four shillings spending money next week, for running of errands; I shall reduce it to two. You needn't look so cross about it; you may think yourself well off that you didn't get a good thrashing. What's that? *You had rather be thrashed than lose your spending money?* So much the better if you feel the punishment; you'll learn not to be careless; you won't be breaking everything that's put in your hands. What do you suppose will become of you if I don't cure you of your carelessness. You will be a poor miserable creature all the days of your life—I know that. No person can get along in the world that behaves in such a way. Learn to be prudent and careful: don't I give you an example?

What's that, Mrs. Caudle? what do you say? *Who broke the looking-glass yesterday?* That's intended for me, I suppose, because I knocked it down accidentally in the entry. But whose fault was it? what business had the looking-glass in the entry?—tell me that. Is the entry the proper place for looking-glasses, Mrs. Caudle? Whose fault was it? was it mine? No, madam; it was the fault of the person who put the looking-glass in the entry. What? *I put it there myself?* Did I put it there, Mrs. Caudle, to stand a week against the entry wall? I intended to have passed over that affair, but you've brought it up yourself. Perhaps you can tell the reason why it was not properly hung up in the parlor; I hope you can. It was a careless trick, having the looking-glass right in the public entry, to be stumbled over by everybody. You can't throw it off upon me, madam. If I had not stumbled against it, some one else

would have knocked it down, and it would have been broken all the same. As for James, he is a careless——

Eh! Mrs. Caudle; what are you saying to that boy? *You were telling him not to feel so bad?*—well!—*and you would make up the two shillings to him?* Was ever such a thing heard of? Is that the way you interfere with my government of the children? A pretty house we shall have presently! Mrs. Caudle, you'll ruin the children; you'll teach them to be careless and disobedient. I won't have such doings, madam; you shall not give James the two shillings that I have docked him. If you have got so much money to throw away, you had better give it to me. Perhaps you think, though, that it's all come about from your own fault: perhaps you think it's all sprung from your putting flies in the soup.

I dare say, Mrs. Caudle, you would like to have me hold my tongue, and eat my dinner; I dare say you would. I don't care much about my dinner, you may be sure of that. That fly spoiled my appetite pretty effectually; I haven't a stomach for everything.

Yes, I'll take a little of the custard, if you'll insure me against flies.

What? *How can I talk so?* I'm sure I have reason for talking so; it's just as likely as not that there are flies in the custard. There was a fly in the soup, Mrs. Caudle; you can't deny that.

No, I don't see any; I'll risk it.

Caudle soon after rose from the table; and as he reached the door, he spoke to me: 'Mrs. Caudle, I'll send home a fly-trap this very afternoon; I won't be poisoned to death with flies.'

H A R A N G U E X V I.

Mrs. Caudle has been Shopping.

I MUST say, Mrs. Caudle, that I've set down to a better table than this, before now. I don't want to find fault, Betsey—that's not my disposition. Things can't always go exactly right—it isn't reasonable to expect they will. I'm not disposed to find fault, and yet I think you might have done a little better.

Eh? What's that? what do you say, Mrs. Caudle? *You've been out shopping, all the morning with Mrs. Embury?* You have been

in very poor business then, that's my opinion. It shows what a regard you have for me, when you can go out shopping all the morning, and let my dinner take care of itself. I'm positive you didn't want to purchase any thing. The house is full of clothing, and knick-knacks, and of course you don't want to buy any more of them. Shopping is a fashionable amusement with the ladies. I'm aware of that; but then you are not a fashionable woman;

and you might get along without it. What? *You didn't go shopping for amusement?* What then, pray? *You went to buy a new dress?*

There's four or five pounds gone this morning; four or five pounds, I'll warrant me. How many dresses have you already, Mrs. Caudle? Eh? what's that? *You don't know?* Hear the woman. You have so many dresses, madam, that you can't count them; and you go and buy another. Can't you tell me within a dozen, how many dresses you've got? What do you care, madam? Are you going to set up a shop, by-and-by, and sell second-hand clothing? It looks like it, upon my word. You'll do a profitable business in that line. You'll realize a very handsome sum of money. I don't understand you, Mrs. Caudle. I've been allowed to have some brains. There's nobody in the street who will not admit that Job Caudle knows enough to go in when it rains, but I can't understand such conduct. There's no reason in it—that's the truth.

So you have been out shopping, all the morning. You've bought something besides a dress, no doubt. There's no harm in my talking, madam, I take it. What? *You don't interfere about my clothing?* The deuce you don't, and why don't you? Because you know, Mrs. Caudle, that I'm a prudent man; you see that. When one coat is worn out, I buy another—that's my rule. I have garments for use, not for show. There's no necessity for interfering with me; but you are getting to be extravagant; you are setting up for a fashionable lady, I believe. Do you suppose that this state of things can last long? Do you think I'm made of money? if you do you are very much mistaken, that's all. I am not made of money, Mrs. Caudle. There's an end to my purse, and it seems to me that you are determined to find it.

If you wanted to go shopping, why didn't you buy something for the children? They need some new things, I dare say. What's that? *You did?* Why, you have really run up a very nice bill, Mrs. Caudle. You've done a very good morning's work. We are getting along very well—I making shillings, and you spending pounds. What? *I needn't pretend to be so very poor?* I don't make any such pretensions, madam. I am not so very poor; but, because I have saved a little money, is it all to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, for dress? Ain't you ashamed to show such an example to the children; they're getting old enough to observe what is going on in the family. Do you want to make them

extravagant and proud? Do you want them to set their hearts upon nothing but dress and finery? The girls will make pretty wives for honest tradesmen, with the notions you put in their heads. Nothing but dress! dress! dress! There's nothing else heard from morning till night. What under heaven is the world coming to? You needn't tell me, that you are not extravagant. Mrs. Caudle, remember Draper's bill, of twenty-five pounds eight—only think of that!

And you went with Mrs. Embury. You're getting fine associates, truly. What did you want with Mrs. Embury? Eh? *She's an excellent judge of dry goods?* I dare say she is, she has bought enough of them in her day. She wears a milliner's shop on her back. There's a fine example for you, Mrs. Caudle. Poor Embury, the husband of that woman, was doing a fine business a few years ago; he had money in the funds; a round sum, madam. What's become of it? He's struggling along between wind and water; he'll go down, Mrs. Caudle; I prophesy it, he'll go down. He'll be in the garret in less than a year—and why? Look at the extravagance of his wife. What do you say? *There's a better reason than that?* What is it? *He's a drunken brute?* And what drove him to intemperance, tell me that? There's the kernel of the whole matter. It was the extravagance of the very woman you've chosen for your associate. *You don't believe it.* Of course you don't—you believe nothing that I say—I'm a fool in your eyes.

Well, Mrs. Caudle, I'm talking to no purpose, I see that. The end will come, mind I tell you, the end will come. Go on, madam.

But if you are really determined to ruin me in this way, don't starve me too. I think you might choose some time for your shopping that would give me a chance of something to eat. It's getting worse and worse, Betsey. What between house cleaning, and auctions, and pleasure visits to your mother, and shopping, I can hardly get a good dinner from one year's end to the other. I'm getting tired of complaining. What's that? *You're really glad to hear it?* Mrs. Caudle, do you wish to provoke me. I shall not complain much longer; I'll find out a remedy, somehow, madam. I won't be treated in this shameful way—I will not, Mrs. Caudle.

Caudle left the table in a huff, and disappeared before I had a chance of showing him my purchase. As he slammed the door, I could just hear him say, 'I'll put a stop to this or—'

H A R A N G U E X V I I .

Mr. Caudle has found the Street-door unlocked.

WELL, upon my word, Mrs. Caudle, things are coming to a fine pass in this house. Every day something new comes up. I'm getting so that I don't feel astonished whatever occurs. I dare say I shall be turned out of house and home before I know it. And you pretend to be such a careful housewife. To take your word for it there is n't a woman in the street that looks after things as carefully as you do Heaven help the husbands, I say. If such be the case they are in a bad way, and their property too.

How's that? Eh? *What is the matter now? What am I talking about?* Oh! nothing at all. I dare say you will consider it a mere trifle. You're a woman of great spirit, and great ideas, and don't trouble yourself about small things. It requires a war or a conflagration at least to worry you. But I, Mrs. Caudle, I consider it a matter of importance. I'm a good easy soul, that I admit: and as patient as Job. I can see, though, how things are going. Eh? *What has happened now?* Madam, I'll tell you what has happened. The front door was unlocked when I came home to dinner; yes, Mrs. Caudle, I laid my hand upon the knob of the door, turned it, and it flew open. The door was unlocked: the front door. Is that nothing?

I opened the door without ringing. Any other person could have done the same thing, don't you see that? A perfect stranger might have walked into the house without so much as saying, 'By your leave.' The chimney sweeps or any body might have come in just as I did; and if a stranger had come in, what do you suppose he would have done? Eh? What's that? *Gone out again probably?* Mrs. Caudle, do you think this is a subject for joking? I do not. I am in earnest, I can assure you. You may consider it very witty to reply to me in that way, but no woman that thought any thing of herself would choose such a time to show it. I know why you do it; you want to provoke me; I shall not be provoked, madam, but I shall tell you plainly what I think of your conduct.

What do you say? *Ain't I ashamed of always going on so at the dinner table?* Don't turn on me in that way, Mrs. Caudle. It won't

do. Is it my fault that the street door was left unlocked? If you can say it's my fault, I'll give it up. You may say what you please and I'll bear it. Your tongue goes fast enough when any thing don't suit you. If you believe you're right, you can preach by the hour; but when you are wrong, you grow sulky. You don't like to hear about it. Is it my fault, I say, Mrs. Caudle, that the street door was left unlocked? Where's the use in asking the question? You can't lay the blame on me. There's blame somewhere. Somebody has been so negligent as to leave the door unlocked. That's evident. That can't be denied. Now who was it? Who's responsible for it? The mistress of the house of course. No, madam, I am not ashamed of speaking my mind freely when I see things going wrong. If I were what would become of us all? What would become of the children—the furniture?

Do you know, Mrs. Caudle, how many thieves there are in London? *You don't?*—Well, madam, there are twenty thousand thieves in London—twenty thousand? There are thieves enough in London to make an army; and yet you leave the street door unlocked. What can you be thinking of? I should like to know what's to prevent one of those fellows coming in at mid-day and stealing what he can lay his hands on. Such things are done every day. Davis lost an overcoat worth eight pounds last week just in that way. There's an account in the Times this morning, of a thief that entered a dwelling house in Conduit street in broad day light, and went off with a cart-load of valuable articles. We've got some things that we should miss, Mrs. Caudle. There's the bronze clock on the mantel-piece that cost me fifteen pounds last August. There's the pair of silver candle-sticks. There's the silver tea set in the long closet. There's the clothing that's cost first and last a mint of money. You can't pretend that we are not in danger of losing all these things if you leave the street door unlocked.

And the street door was unlocked, Mrs. Caudle. That's as clear as preaching. Eh? What? *You don't deny it?* Of course you don't. There would n't be any use in deny-

ing it. I found the door open myself. I have n't lost my senses. You might talk till you were black and you could n't convince me that the street door was n't open. But how did it happen that the door was left unlocked? That's the question. I should really like to know, Mrs. Caudle.

Eh? What? *You ran across the street of an errand and forgot the door when you came back?* And what do you think of such carelessness, madam? Arn't you afraid to think of what might have happened? I dare say the baby has been playing in the entry half the forenoon. *What of that?* Do you mean to ask that question seriously? You can see nothing to be alarmed at, I suppose. There are other people in the world besides thieves. They don't do all the mischief. Have you never heard of gypsies, Mrs. Caudle? Well, there are gypsies in London. They hide themselves in holes and caverns for months and months, and then dart out of their hiding places for what they can get. Gypsies steal children—young children—babes, madam. And I ask you what was there to prevent one of them from coming into our entry this morning and kidnapping the baby?

Yes! yes! if that had happened you would have felt terribly. There would have been a time in the house. I understand that perfectly well. Yet bad as it would be to have the child kidnapped by a gypsy, I look to see something worse. You've got to leaving the street door unlocked. Next you will leave it wide open. That's the next thing. I'll bet my head for a foot-ball that in less than a month the street door will be left wide open. The baby will crawl out of the entry into the street, and be run over by a dray-man's cart. There's no doubt of it. I expect nothing else. I shall come home some of these days and find the child crushed to death. I warn you now, Mrs. Caudle. I warn you against leaving the street door open. If the child is killed, it shan't be my fault. I'm doing what I can to prevent it. I must go to the shop. It's impossible that I should stay here and watch the street door, utterly impossible, and you know it.

What do you say? *Can't I stop talking and eat my dinner?* Mrs. Caudle! Is that all you feel disposed to trouble yourself about what I am saying? You want to stop me.

How can I think about my dinner, when I see my property lying exposed to every thief in the city, and the children in danger of being kidnapped or murdered? What? *It's all nonsense?* Nonsense, madam! Do I talk nonsense? I would have you to know that if there is one thing more than another on which I pride myself, it is sound common sense. You can't snub me off in that way. I'm not to be snubbed off, Mrs. Caudle. I know I'm in the right. But the truth is, you'll never hear reason; you'll never listen to reason, and you know it.

It's all nonsense, is it? That's the same as saying that there is nothing wrong in leaving the street door unlocked. That's your idea, I suppose; and no doubt you will carry it out. You will make a practice of it, you will leave it unlocked on purpose. I see how it is; I shall become a poor man; I shall be ruined, Mrs. Caudle. I shall be robbed by half the thieves in the city. There's no fortune that can stand it, let alone the means of a common tradesman. The parish poor house stares me in the face, Mrs. Caudle. If it was a necessary risk, I would n't mind it so much; but it is a little too bad for a man to lose his property by such a piece of negligence as leaving the street door unlocked.

You needn't sit up for me o' nights any more, Mrs. Caudle. It's perfectly ridiculous. Nor will I get a night-key, as I've talked about once or twice. I may as well save the expense of it. You can leave the door unlocked, madam; you can leave the street door unlocked. There's no more danger of thieves at one time than at another; day time or night time—it's the same thing to them. It's foolish to be sitting up hour after hour when I happen to be away, just to unlock the street door when I come home. According to your principles, it's all nonsense. Leave the street door unlocked, Mrs. Caudle. We shall see what will come of it; we shall see who's the best judge of nonsense, you or I! If I'm a fool, I'll give up. You shall take the helm, and do as you please.

Caudle turned as he left the room, and added, with a sneer—"Don't lock the door after me, Mrs. Caudle. Give the thieves a fair chance!"

H A R A N G U E X V I I I .

Mr. Caudle dines at a quarter past one o'clock.

So! the dinner's ready at last. Well, that's something. I shan't have to go back to the shop without a mouthful to eat. I'm thankful, Betsey, that it's no worse. A dinner's a dinner, if you do have to wait till night for it. I'm a patient man. I don't mind waiting.

Eh? What's that? *Then what am I grumbling for?* That's elegant language to use before the children! We shall have them talking to each other in that style, presently. Grumbling! indeed; I do not grumble, Mrs. Caudle, but I complain; and why should n't I? Do you know how late it is? Have you any idea whatever of the time of day? It is a quarter past one o'clock! Yes, madam, a quarter after one. There is my watch; look at it, and see if there is any mistake! It's sixteen minutes past one, Mrs. Caudle; it is over the quarter rather than under it! And what is our dinner hour? One o'clock! The dinner hour is one o'clock! Here I have been waiting patiently over a quarter of an hour for my dinner. Is that nothing, madam?

How? What do you say? *The roasting piece is large, and took longer than usual to cook it?* Then why in the name of goodness couldn't it have been put down to the fire a quarter of an hour earlier? That's no excuse, Mrs. Caudle. You knew its size before it was cooked as well as after, and you might have calculated accordingly. You pretend to a great judgment in such matters. I should like to see a little more of it, and hear less. You're positive that's it, are you? Haven't you been to an auction this morning, Mrs. Caudle, and bought another cheap grate? Haven't you been out shopping with your friend, Mrs. Embury? Eh? What? *None of my business?* The devil it isn't any of my business, when I have been detained a quarter of an hour for my dinner! I don't like to be kept waiting for my dinner. The dinner hour is one o'clock, and a good housewife, madam, will not keep her husband waiting.

What have I just said? What? *That I didn't mind waiting?* There, now, I won't have my own words thrown back in my teeth in that way. You understand me, Betsey. You knew what I meant. But you think you can tease me into a passion by fetching up

such things. You are a cross, tantalizing woman—that's a fact! You catch at every word I say, instead of trying to please me, and do as I wish. Suppose I was to pursue the same course, Mrs. Caudle? Suppose I was to disregard your comforts, and talk to you as if your feelings were nothing to me, how would you like that? Just suppose the tables were turned, and that I was a cross, fault-finding, tantalizing, negligent man, instead of being what I am; how do you think matters would go on in this house? Very differently, you may depend on that. And you ought to know that, when I do say a word, it is on account of something that troubles me beyond measure. For if there is any thing on earth, madam, which I particularly dislike, it is to be kept waiting for my dinner.

And this isn't the first time it has happened; if this was the first time it would be another affair. It happened last week, Mrs. Caudle, when the baby was sick; and it happened the week before that, I remember very well. No, if it was only once or twice in a year, I shouldn't think so much of it; but it happens very frequently. The day that I asked Davis to dine with me it was the same thing. I told him to remember that we were plain tradesfolks, and that we dined punctually at one o'clock. He was here in time; but the dinner was not ready till twenty minutes past one. How did it look? what do you suppose he thought of our punctuality? Twenty minutes past one: I marked the time, Mrs. Caudle, although I did not care to say anything about it. And so it is, time after time. Now I protest against such a state of things; I want my dinner at the regular hour, whatever that may be: you understand me, don't you?

If you don't like the hour, Mrs. Caudle, change it. If the dinner can't be got ready till a quarter past one, let that be the dinner hour. I am not particular about that; all I want is a regular hour for dinner, when I shall not be forced to wait. I am a tradesman, and have business to look after; I can't lose time, Mrs. Caudle, in the middle of the day. It takes me just five minutes to walk

home from the shop. Now I want to know the precise time when dinner will be ready, so as to regulate my movements accordingly; don't you see that? Punctuality is the life of trade; and besides, I wish the children to learn punctuality in their youth: how will they, if they have such an example before them? how can they, Mrs. Caudle? It's impossible, quite impossible. And so I say, madam, that if you prefer it, if you say it's necessary, we'll change the dinner hour; we'll make it a quarter past one instead of one o'clock. Fix your own time, and then let there be no delay. What do you say? Shall it be a quarter past one?—any hour; any hour, madam, so that I'm not compelled to wait for my dinner.

Eh! what's that? how's that? *Dinner often waits for me?* When did such a thing happen, Mrs. Caudle? *Yesterday the dinner waited half an hour for me?* And what was the reason, do you know that? I was selling a bale of goods to a customer; that was the reason. I was turning an honest penny for the good of the family, madam. How long do you suppose there would be anything to put on the table if I neglected my business? That's a pretty thing to throw up at me,—a very pretty thing. Dinner waited for me, did it? Yes, madam; and I was earning money to pay for it. When I am rich, Mrs. Caudle, I'll do nothing but dance attendance on your movements; but just now I must look out for the shop. You can't pretend to say that I am not a punctual man; everybody in the street knows that I'm a punctual man. I'm known on 'Change for a punctual man; my character is established, and you can't talk it down.

Well, and so the dinner hour is changed;

after this it's a quarter past one—that's understood between us. What's that? what do you say? *You don't want it changed?* Very well; have your own way, Mrs. Caudle; only don't keep me waiting again unless you wish to see me offended; I'm not offended now. What are you laughing at, Betsey? Am I to be laughed at when I am talking seriously to you? am I Punchinello, madam? What? eh! what do you say? *Don't flourish the carving-knife so?* That is pretty talk; I understand you, Mrs. Caudle. You want to make the children think that I'm threatening you with the carving-knife; you want to set them talking about it. The next thing there will be a handsome report in the neighborhood. Yes; there will be a report that Job Caudle threatened to stab his wife at the dinner table with a carving-knife. Set it afloat as soon as you please, madam; nobody will believe it. The neighbors know me; and they know you, Mrs. Caudle.

You may well laugh at me; I dare say that I'm a laughingstock for you. I don't doubt you think I'm a fool for putting up with your impositions; and so I am, I admit it. But don't go too far; don't bear down too hard on a patient man. For the sake of the children you think that I'll bear everything; I won't promise it, and you had better not count on it. I don't threaten you; I don't believe in threatening women; but I would advise you to look about you. I don't like to be laughed at, Mrs. Caudle; I don't like to be kept waiting for my dinner. Is that plain enough; if it ain't, perhaps I'll talk plainer another time.

Here Caudle stopped out of breath, and left the table, continuing his grumbling like a dog with a sore head.

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